

The
BOOKSHOP
of the
WORLD

Making and
Trading Books in
the Dutch Golden Age



Andrew Pettegree
&
Arthur der Weduwen

'Magnificent.'

Harold J. Cook, author of *Matters of Exchange*

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PRELUDE



Making Room for Books

WHEN IN 1656 REMBRANDT was forced to declare bankruptcy, a full inventory was made of all of his remaining possessions. Among the paintings, furniture and household goods at the house on the Breestraat, were only twenty-two books. By this time Rembrandt, one of the greatest artists of the age, had fallen a long way. An earlier sale had cleared out most of his art; what remained was the sad residue of a rampageous and self-indulgent celebrity lifestyle. The fact that Rembrandt possessed only twenty-two books, in Amsterdam of all places, was a fitting mark of his near destitution.¹ For by this point the Dutch Republic was a land teeming with books. Its publishers produced some of the most fabulous books of the age. More of its citizens read and owned books than anywhere else in Europe.

In the seventeenth century, the Dutch published more books, per capita, than any other book-producing nation. True to form, they invented some of the most advanced techniques of the era for selling and marketing print. This was a land where books and reading were integral to the way society functioned, and how people thought of themselves. So it is all the more surprising that books have somehow been written out of the narrative of the Dutch Golden Age. Dazzled by the great Dutch painters, Rembrandt and Frans Hals, the elegant poise of Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch, the grandeur of the landscapes of Jan van Goyen and Jacob van Ruisdael, we seem to have overlooked the quiet revolution going on in the bourgeois home. This was the way in which books were moulding and reshaping Dutch society. It is said that Dutch homes found space for 3 million pictures on their walls. Maybe, but they produced many more books, perhaps as many as 300 million. They traded at least 4 million books at auction.

The products of the Dutch book industry also constituted one of the Republic's major exports, which could scarcely be said of its paintings. We admire Dutch painting much more than did seventeenth-century Europe's leading connoisseurs.² Despite the best efforts of the House of Orange to build an international reputation for their favoured painters (which briefly

included Rembrandt), no Dutch painter came close to attracting the international fame of the great artists of the Catholic Southern Netherlands, Rubens and Van Dyck, whose work inspired an almost frantic passion among the international collecting elite. The appeal of many of the Dutch paintings that now adorn the world's art galleries, depicting the jolly village inn or the luscious still life, was essentially parochial.

A key aspect of this buoyant domestic market was the place where art and books overlapped: the sale of engravings or woodcuts on paper. This was where pictures could most effectively be combined with text. Such illustrated sheets reached a wide public, who in times of triumph or national crisis would gladly expend some of their hard-earned cash on prints celebrating the victories of the Republic's navy or excoriating its enemies. So pervasive was this market that a typical Dutch home was far more likely to decorate its walls with a map or engraving of a recent battle scene than a still life or landscape – as, indeed, a careful study of the many Dutch paintings of Dutch interiors will reveal. These news prints were a habitual presence on the shelves or tables of the nation's many bookshops: a further profitable aspect of a diverse and well-rounded trade.

So how do we make room for books in our picture of the Dutch Golden Age? How indeed did Dutch households make room for books? For this was a crowded little country, with much of its population crammed into the cities of the province of Holland. And yet the Dutch not only printed millions of books, they imported them in vast numbers, from Germany, France and Italy. Many were intended for re-export, for the Dutch had conquered the international book trade with the same steely sense of purpose they devoted to the trade in silk, pepper and whale blubber. By 1650 Amsterdam was well on the way to earning Voltaire's famous epithet as 'the warehouse of the world', and this was resented by its neighbours.³ The reaction against Dutch predatory capitalism that ignited the wars of the later seventeenth century was fuelled partly by Dutch success in colonising the international book trade.

Yet this was not before Amsterdam's households had had half a century to fill their houses with books. The impact was extraordinary. Two hundred years before, Rembrandt's bookshelf, with its meagre twenty-two titles, would have represented a not discreditable collection for someone outside the upper echelons of the European aristocracy or church hierarchy. In the sixteenth century, a doctor or lawyer might own two or three hundred books, though this was a considerable collection. Yet in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic a hundred years later, even a country pastor could

aspire to build a library of this size. A serious scholarly collection was numbered in the thousands – many of the professors of the five Dutch universities assembled collections many times larger than that of their local university library. The collection of an Amsterdam brewer, auctioned in the 1680s, numbered more than a thousand titles; the library of a soldier, Joachim Elias Otto, sold in 1690, contained 1,500 books.

Where did they find room to store all these books? Why, indeed, did the Dutch become so bookish? They did so because books mattered. The Dutch produced some wonderful books, masterpieces of craftsmanship and scholarship, like the famous Blaeu atlases. But a book like this might cost the equivalent of a year's salary for all but the most affluent citizens. What fuelled the market was a steady recurring trade in the sort of books that might be the careful, considered purchases of an artisan or bourgeois household. Families like this might buy three, five or ten books a year. These were books they bought for use: a book of medical recipes to ensure the health of the household, a book on accounting to help their son to a better job, or, most of all, as part of their devotional life. These books tell us not only how the Dutch lived their lives, but who they were.

Yet these are the books that have become almost invisible in the story of the Dutch Republic. They were not, like the jolly moralising poems of Jacob Cats, or the plays of Vondel, destined for posterity. They were intended to be used every day, and then worn out. Few have made it through the centuries to take their place on the shelves of a library. Those that have are almost inevitably the single survivor of an edition of 500 or 1,000. So this book is partly an exercise in reversing this historical invisibility, an attempt to reconstruct the lost world of cheap print. For it is books like these that take us closest to understanding the heart and soul of this complex, contradictory society.

THE MIRACLE OF THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

So what was this new state that so bedazzled and fascinated its European contemporaries? In seventeenth-century Europe everyone kept one eye on the Dutch. In the courts of the Sun King Louis XIV, Stuart England and the various Habsburg capitals, the success of the Dutch was somewhat baffling. How could a state rise from nothing, in a land scarcely above sea level, with little space and no raw materials, and now dominate the world's trade? And do all this without a king? You did not have to be the humiliated Stuart monarchs, forced to pawn their crown jewels in Amsterdam to fight their ungrateful citizens, to find this difficult to stomach.

The Dutch Republic was a society created out of war. One hundred years before, Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor but also heir to the wondrous Burgundian state, had united the seventeen provinces of the Netherlands. The jewels in his crown were the southern states of Flanders and Brabant, home to the richest cities and the most productive industry. Brussels was the capital and Antwerp, the great sea-port of the north, the powerhouse of its economy. It was in these places that resistance was greatest when, with Charles's abdication, his Spanish son Philip II attempted to establish his right to rule the Netherlands in his own way, and as part of his increasingly global empire. The Dutch were not used to this sort of handling: they expected to be flattered, cajoled and bargained with. They had been generous to Charles, who was locally born; Philip they found difficult to fathom. Impelled by a breakdown in relations with the now absent king, exacerbated by a new crisis in religion caused by the growth of a dissident Calvinist Church, in 1566 the provinces erupted in revolt. There followed an apparently endless succession of punishments and surrenders, defiant sieges and dogged resistance. In 1585, five years after Louis Elzevier, the founding father of the most famous Dutch publishing family, had abandoned the Catholic south for a new future in the emerging northern state, the fall of Antwerp sealed the Spanish reconquest of the southern provinces. The future of the rebellion, and hopes of an independent future free of Spain, lay in the north.

In the sixteenth century, Holland was in the shadow of its glittering southern neighbours, a province of towns and waterways, wide rivers and low-lying boggy terrain. The unpromising features that had dictated a low-key economy of seafaring and fishery would now prove the north's salvation, frustrating any attempts at reconquest. The Spanish armies came close, sacking their way with conspicuous brutality into Holland, and conquering Haarlem, but Leiden held out, starving and desperate, just long enough for the Spanish armies definitively to run out of funds. Amsterdam was at this time largely a bystander, loyally and pragmatically Spanish while its neighbours suffered, and only quietly switched sides when Holland seemed secure.⁴

Holland was now indisputably the centre of the revolt, and the best hope of a future free from Spanish rule. The province began to grow, helped by a massive influx of economic migrants, many of them Protestant refugees from the reconquered southern provinces. In 1566, Amsterdam had been a modestly sized city of 25,000 inhabitants. By 1620, it had quadrupled in size and was a force to reckon with in the new global economy. The newcomers were hardworking and extremely skilled, including men of every conceivable trade, merchants and craftsmen. Among them were a sizeable number



1 A map of the Dutch Republic by Johannes Janssonius, a great rival of the Blaeus in the business of cartography. The Republic was made up of the seven provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Gelderland, Overijssel, Friesland and Groningen. Clearly visible are the newly reclaimed territories in North Holland, and the dangerous shoals on the Zuiderzee and around the Wadden islands, which made the route into Amsterdam so perilous for all but the most experienced pilots.

from the print trade. In this as in so many industries, the prosperity of Antwerp and Flanders was simply transferred to its new northern neighbour: transplanted and multiplied. The Dutch miracle was born.

The Dutch enjoyed their success, their republican values and tradition of citizen activism. The extraordinary efflorescence of Dutch art functioned as an orgy of self-celebration, both of what they had become, and what they had left behind. But this was a society born in the trauma of war, a war which never really seemed to end. Extraordinarily, in a society that depended entirely on commerce, and often lacked the military muscle to defend it, the Dutch were actually at peace for only sixteen years between 1568 and 1700.⁵ The Dutch century was pockmarked by political convulsions and crisis. Four key dates which bookmark the century, 1618, 1650, 1672 and 1688, all brought revolutions in government, and eventually the erosion of the republican constitution.

A lot about the Dutch Republic is not as it seems. The new Republic was born in a religious and constitutional revolt: in the dark days of the Spanish sieges it was Calvinist magistrates, and Calvinist friends abroad, who were at the heart of the desperate resistance. Naturally, as the Spanish threat receded, the ministers expected to come into their reward. The best churches became theirs, but the magistrates, grateful but wary, resisted a Calvinist theocracy. The Reformed religion enjoyed a sort of hybrid status, officially protected but denied the opportunity to shape the morals of the community that a monopoly of worship would have permitted.

Other faiths were allowed to maintain a discreet existence, even, to the fury of the baffled Calvinist ministers, Roman Catholics. It would, after all, have been difficult for a state born in revulsion from religious persecution to become in turn a persecutor. But religious minorities were tolerated rather than encouraged. In some parts of the new state, especially the newly conquered parts of Brabant known as the Generality Lands, the famous Dutch tradition of toleration turns out to be more a sort of protection racket, the opportunity to shake down Catholic communities in return for turning a blind eye to the continuation of their worship. These heavily Catholic occupied territories were administered as a conquered colony, with no voting rights in the new state. This was hardly an alluring advertisement of the advantages of Dutch administration for other parts of the Southern Netherlands. And Catholics were not alone in feeling less loved. Lutherans and Mennonites, the more peaceable successors of the sixteenth-century Anabaptists, also suffered some measure of social disadvantage, and even in the Calvinist family, quarrels could be poisonous. At various periods in the long squabble between orthodox and more pliant arms of Calvinism, the dissident Remonstrants were effectively excluded from public life, their ministers expelled and made destitute.⁶ Meanwhile the Calvinist ministers kept up their incessant, persistent calls for more perfect reformation. In times of crisis, they would remember the slights and rebukes of the arrogant and all too secular-minded magistrates. They would prove themselves both difficult friends and dangerous enemies.

BUILDING A LIBRARY

The Dutch Republic, a small nation of seven confederated states with fewer than 2 million people and no hereditary ruler, was the most interesting experiment in civilisation conducted in the western world. In the resonant words of an earlier Dutch scholar, with their voyages of exploration at the

beginning of the century, 'the Dutch took fame by storm'.⁷ But the extraordinary growth of this vibrant society, and its book world, poses questions that illuminate not only the Dutch experience, but go to the heart of perennial issues of far wider application.

How did the book world function in this prosperous, urbane but curiously aggressive and unsettled little country? In so far as scholars have turned their attention to this issue, they have awarded the Dutch high marks: for their sophisticated market arrangement; for their commercial networks; for their presence in export markets; for the beauty and sophistication of their printed books. A largely urban society with good internal communications, enjoying the fruits of rapid economic growth, this was a natural place for a sophisticated book world, and so it would prove. The Dutch brought to the business of books both enormous capital resources and great inventiveness, not least their pivotal role in the invention of the newspaper.

The Dutch book world can be credited with some of the great scholarly innovations of the age, among them the most famous maps of the early modern world. To contemporaries it was the 'mecca for authors', the opportunity both to have the best-quality books published, to test radical ideas, and to make a little money for their work. The Dutch made a significant contribution to classical scholarship in the humanist tradition, and the development of new Oriental typefaces; they also took a leading role in the exploration of far-flung worlds. All of this activity was displayed to the world by the great names of publishing: the Elzeviers and the Blaeus. When Galileo was forbidden to publish his work in Italy, it was the Leiden firm of Abraham and Bonaventura Elzevier that brought *Two New Sciences* to the press. Galileo contributed a preface personally thanking the Elzeviers for rescuing his work in this way.

But were famous and prestigious texts like these the ones that ordinary burgher families wanted to read? Are we accepting too easily that the Amsterdam houses that catered for the international Republic of Letters could rely on the same books having resonance in the domestic market? Certainly, the Dutch Republic saw the greatest commercialisation of knowledge in the seventeenth century. So to what extent was this knowledge internalised? Which books truly made the Dutch Golden Age? It is clear that the Dutch publishing industry was capable of much. But what did it actually do? This is a question to which, for the first time, we may now be able to offer a definitive answer.

By the beginning of the seventeenth century, it was already over 150 years since the invention of printing had revolutionised the supply and



2 Books, music and other printed matter were a common feature of these allegorical still lives. This particular painting marks the passing of Admiral Tromp, one of the great heroes of the Dutch naval wars.

availability of books. But a book was still a considered purchase, even for those who had accumulated collections of many hundreds of them; and many Dutch citizens, as we will see, had to content themselves with far fewer. Even for the most profligate spenders, perhaps especially for them, a book was far more than simple reading matter: buyers bought books for far more than their text. For professional men, to be surrounded by books was to take on the mantle of borrowed erudition, a tangible certification of professional competence. Sometimes people bought recreational literature for much the same reason, especially the fashionable Elzevier editions. To have these on your shelves, or in your pocket, was to enter the world of the sophisticated erudite connoisseur. This sentiment was beautifully expressed by an author, Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac, when he learned that his work was to be published as an Elzevier. 'I have been made a part of the immortal republic. I have been received in the society of demi-gods. In effect, we all live together at Leiden under the same roof. Thanks to you, I find myself beside Seneca, sometimes above Tacitus and Livy.'⁸ Here the Republic of

Letters was made flesh in the tangible form of a row of small volumes of uniform format, uniting the wisdom of the ancients with the present day.

Blessed with the fruits of their trading ventures, the citizens of the Dutch Republic could signal their social ascent by building a library: often quite literally, as this was the first period in history in which householders outside the elite could contemplate setting aside a special room in their houses for the keeping (and display) of books. Lower down the social scale, the purchase of books was an even more significant assertion of social place. When the Dutch minister Franciscus Ridderus wrote in 1663, 'what is a man, who has no understanding of good books! How plain must those people be, who have no books!', this was setting a new standard, even for a society as sophisticated as the Dutch Republic.⁹ Books took on a totemic role, affirming allegiance to a particular confession, the aspiration to self-improvement (self-help books were an especially popular purchase), or even just the fact that their owners could read. In mediaeval paintings it will generally be the Virgin Mary holding a book. In the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, books were ubiquitous props, the furnishing of portraits or genre pieces, even the centre-piece of a *vanitas* still life, warning against the sin of pride.

PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

The people of the Dutch Republic became bookish partly because their rulers ensured that this would be so. This was Europe's most urban, most literate and most educated society. The establishment of schools was a chief priority of the state and municipal authorities. By the middle of the seventeenth century the new state had ninety-two Latin schools, five universities and fifteen 'illustrious schools', institutions of higher education that did not award degrees. The curriculum to be followed and books to be used were carefully laid down in ordinances like the 1625 Holland school order. This Latin education produced the new bureaucratic elite of the Republic: men destined to be officials, regents, lawyers, doctors and ministers. They knew each other well, because they had studied together. But the state did not ignore the educational needs of the wider population. Vernacular schooling was catered for by so-called 'French schools', many of them private institutions, as well as many 'Dutch schools', free to the poorest in the country. The Dutch were pioneers in the teaching of mathematics, surveying and accountancy, and the first to integrate these practical subjects into the syllabus of higher education.

The Dutch state needed an educated people, partly because it bombarded them with print. Government was technically the preserve of a closed elite,



3 Andries Bicker, burgomaster of Amsterdam, here at the height of his power, clutches one of the small-format texts which came to define the Dutch print industry.

the regent class. But in the new Republic everyone had an opinion; and the government was made painfully aware that if it did not explain itself to the people, then someone else would set the political agenda – through pamphlets, sermons or gossip on the streets. So politics created a massive amount of work for the Republic's lucky printers. In this context it is important to remind ourselves that many texts published in this period were never intended for commercial sale. Governing authorities distributed ordinances or notifications as broadsheets or pamphlets; petitioners seeking favour or redress had their petitions printed to press into the hands of people in power. This non-commercial print was not exclusively a vernacular market. Latin books, such as funeral orations or student dissertations, were always distributed free to those attending (and in the case of the dissertations, printed at the students' expense). This sort of work, which made up a surprising proportion of the output of the press, was extremely lucrative for the publishing

trade. Commissions of this sort, dissertations or state ordinances, were all paid for in cash and delivered to a single client, so there were none of the usual costs of distribution and sale. It was a blot on the reputation of the Elzeviers that they exploited their monopoly of dissertation publishing in Leiden to charge students outrageous prices for careless work.

Much of this non-commercial print was published to influence or persuade – sometimes particular people, sometimes the general public. In the 1680s foreign diplomats in the Dutch Republic began distributing printed versions of their representations to the States General – an extraordinary development in a professional cadre normally known for their discretion, indeed for their contempt of the ignorant mob. The Dutch regents were obliged to respond: in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic the battle for public opinion was fought out in print. The occasions of acute political crisis generating a surge of inflammatory pamphlets are well known; what is less widely recognised is that even in times of comparative peace, pamphlets made the case for this or that measure, the validity or otherwise of a proposed law, tax or alliance. This was politics of a very public type. The regents learned that to disdain the public, and to disdain print, was to cede ground to political opponents that could never be recovered.

THE POWER OF PRINT

It is clear from the first century of print that publishing could have a transforming impact on the local economy. The German town of Wittenberg in the first years of the Reformation was a case in point, propelled from a standing start to the first rank of print towns by the priceless gift of publishing Luther's works. In the Dutch Republic the situation was somewhat different, not least because so many branches of commerce and industry generated vast profits during the years of expansive growth. For all that, it is clear that something very unusual was going on in the Dutch book trade. Thanks to recent advances in our knowledge of early modern book production, we are now in a position to place the output of the Dutch book industry in a more coherent international context. This data demonstrates that relative to size of population, the Dutch published ten times as many books as printers in France, Spain or the Italian city-states, and five times as many as in the Holy Roman Empire.

This is a massive difference, which cannot be explained purely by differential literacy rates. Obviously much of the surplus Dutch production was exported. But Dutch exports were often books published abroad and then



4 A very rare sketch of the workshop of Abraham II Elzevier in Leiden. Abraham attracted considerable criticism for the amount he charged students for printing their theses, but as we can see, this was a busy and prosperous office. Note the printed sheets hanging up to dry.

brought to Amsterdam for resale to other foreign clients. This was a typical Dutch technique for adding value to raw materials harvested elsewhere – sometimes it was whale oil from Spitsbergen, sometimes books from Germany; the basic economic principle was the same. But taking all this into account, the reliable heart, the real engine of growth of the Dutch book industry remained books published in the Republic for domestic consumption. The home market remained the most important and most durable. When all the evidence is weighed, Dutch men and women purchased more books per head, and a wider variety of titles, than in any other part of Europe. It was this that guaranteed the vitality of the Dutch book world, an industry that would, in consequence, outlive the dwindling of Dutch economic supremacy in other fields, and live on into the eighteenth century.

If we think we know one thing about the Dutch Republic, it is that this was a tolerant society. As we have seen, with respect to religion, this was only partially true. So too in the print trade. All state and municipal authorities exercised a form of censorship. Particularly strict control was exercised over the contents of newspapers, to prevent publication of sensitive domestic political decisions or material insulting to foreign allies. These restrictions on their freedom of action evoked fewer protests from printers than one might have expected. On the contrary, it was usually publishers who called for action against their industry brethren, to protect their own market.

Censorship, in other words, was not, as the modern view would have it, imposed from above, but positively desired by those who wanted their ability to make money protected.

Yet most of the measures taken to inhibit publications of which the authorities disapproved could be evaded. Publishers who fell out with the Amsterdam town council could move to Utrecht, or even down the road to little Weesp, just two hours away on the new canal. There were always opportunities for the brave and shameless, as can be demonstrated by the career of the incorrigibly contentious newspaper publisher and pamphleteer Gerard Lodewijk van der Macht, who criticised the regents of Holland repeatedly in a career spanning two decades.¹⁰ By the time the authorities caught up with Van der Macht, he had peddled his pamphlets to half of The Hague's booksellers, including some of the most substantial players in the trade. The dirty laundry washed in this case is all laid out in the Dutch National Archives, along with the offending pamphlets. Van der Macht was banished from Holland – but none of the booksellers were punished.

This is the point – whatever the authorities had to say about publishing, those selling forbidden material seldom had anything to fear. The most extraordinary evidence of this freedom to trade comes from auction catalogues. Reading through the lists of books from private libraries offered for sale, we can see lots of Catholic titles, many published in the Southern Netherlands. Numerous Amsterdam publishers kept a large selection in stock for Catholic customers, and sometimes listed these Catholic works in a separate section of the catalogue. This was clearly too big a market to miss out on. Even more bizarrely, some catalogues had a little section of *libri prohibiti*, forbidden books, featuring the works of Spinoza, Hobbes and Pieter de la Court, especially inflammatory political texts or works of religious sects such as the Socinians, considered beyond the pale. Not so forbidden, it seems, that they could not be advertised for sale. The Dutch Republic was a land of many ideologies, many religions, and many points of view – at times of crisis this could erupt in an ugliness that defied all reason. But in normal times, commerce seems to have trumped all other considerations. And this, more than anything, is what defined the book trade; in this it was a faithful mirror of the society it served.

LOST BOOKS

To contemporaries, the Dutch Republic was remarkable for many admirable qualities: its cleanliness, its sober living and its sophistication. Even at the

end of the century, when the 'Dutch miracle' had run its course, the ubiquity of prosperity and innovation was frequently remarked: in the words of a French visitor touring Holland in 1719, 'in this country, everything is new'.¹¹ So there is a certain appropriateness that it has only been possible to explore the full extent of the success of the Dutch book industry thanks to the technological innovation of our own time: the digital revolution.

Forty years ago, studying books was a very different experience. Compiling a list of all the books issued by a particular publisher or author, or printed in a specific town, could be the work of a lifetime. Book historians travelled from library to library, working through card catalogues, enumerating copies, and (if this was permitted) taking photographs to compare these copies with those found in other libraries. Now literally thousands of libraries have online catalogues. With a few clicks, a researcher can access copies of books in distant continents, and it does not take long to assemble large quantities of data. Aggregating and analysing this data still requires skill and experience, but the pace by which one can search for material has increased out of all recognition.

Nothing epitomises this quantum leap in our research resources better than the compilation of national bibliographical projects, and this includes an online catalogue for the period we are studying, the Short-Title Catalogue Netherlands or STCN.¹² Useful though these great survey projects are, it quickly became clear to us that they would not be sufficient for the sort of comprehensive survey of the Dutch book world we had in mind. Most online bibliographies exclude newspapers. The newspaper was a new invention of the seventeenth century, and quickly established a presence in the Dutch Republic.¹³ Newspapers soon became an important part of the recreational reading of many of the Dutch citizens we will meet in this book, and of the information culture of the new state. They also played an important role in the book trade, not least through their precocious adoption of paid advertising. These advertisements were mostly, in the first years, for forthcoming books. So for many reasons, we needed to have a comprehensive survey of these newspapers, which were purchased and read around Europe. As it turned out, Dutch newspapers are far more likely to survive in archives abroad than in Dutch libraries. We found issues of Dutch newspapers in eighty libraries and archives, spread around thirteen countries, and these turn out to be some of the rarest of Dutch printed matter; over half the issues we were able to trace survive in only a single copy, and many more issues are lost altogether.¹⁴

National bibliographies also miss much of the everyday print of government administration, such as ordinances and proclamations, tax forms and

receipts. At first sight this might seem too mundane to deserve much of a role in this book, but it certainly generated a huge amount of work for printers: indeed, many printers, particularly those operating outside the major cities of Holland, would probably have gone out of business without work of this sort. These official communications also turn out to be much more interesting, and much more relevant to the everyday reading of Dutch citizens, than one might imagine. These apparently mundane printed notices, passed out as pamphlets or posted up as broadsheets, played a key role in the information culture of the new state.¹⁵ After all, for many citizens it was much more important to know on which days you were allowed to take your chickens to market, than which Italian cardinal had the best chance of becoming Pope, the sort of information your smarter neighbours would enjoy reading in the newspapers. These official publications can also be difficult to find, and if they survive at all, they will tend to be in archives, rather than the libraries more systematically included in the major online catalogues. So the work for our book involved an extended tour of the city and state archives of the Netherlands, leafing through folders of material to see what we could find. The printed items we found, together with the manuscript correspondence and account books, turned out to be a fascinating read, for it was here that we came face to face with the everyday concerns of Dutch men and women, and began to appreciate the complexity of their engagement with public affairs.¹⁶ So this is a book that encompasses the whole world of print, books in Dutch, French, Latin and many other languages, big books and pamphlets, or single sheets printed on one side only (broadsheets).¹⁷ All of this contributed to shaping the book world of the Dutch Republic.

The third problem we faced was more subtle, but one that goes to the heart of what we have attempted in this book. Libraries, particularly the big libraries most visited by scholars studying the seventeenth century, tend to collect a certain sort of book, very often the books that collectors in the seventeenth century themselves most valued. These books were predominantly large and expensive, and sometimes spectacular, but it is not really clear how representative they are of the everyday reading experience of Dutch men and women. What of the little religious texts, the prayer books and catechisms, or almanacs and self-help manuals? These were the sort of books that were often heavily used and then discarded, either because they had been used to destruction, like school books, or because, like calendars and almanacs, you needed a new one every year. Books of this type clearly played a huge role in the book trade, but reconstructing this part of the Dutch book world is challenging. We often find a popular religious text

described on the title-page as the sixth, tenth or twelfth edition. Sometimes that is the only edition that can now be traced. What of all those earlier editions? These were clearly popular texts, but we would not know it from present library holdings.

It was clear to us from the beginning of this project that recreating this lost world of popular bestsellers would be crucial if we were really trying to understand the Dutch book trade.¹⁸ So we made an important, some might say foolhardy, decision. We would go to libraries to read books, and to archives to investigate the everyday print of government; but we would also attempt to trace and document the lost books of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. This has never before been attempted, for any part of the book world, but with the Dutch Republic we had a huge advantage, because the Dutch publishing industry generated a considerable amount of printed material documenting the book trade. The Dutch were precocious in their adoption of book auctions, and many publishers also issued catalogues of their stock. By combing through these lists of books for sale, we found we could document many thousands of books that simply cannot be found in a library today.

When all of these under-documented categories of print were taken into account, the Dutch book trade takes on massive proportions: we have now documented over 350,000 separate printings, around 300 million copies.¹⁹ The sheer quantity of print is impressive, but it is also the case that the recovery of this lost world of news publishing, government administration and popular bestsellers completely changes our view of the preferences of Dutch readers in the age of Rembrandt. To put this delicately, some of the books in our great libraries survive so well precisely because they were not much read. Sometimes you can order up a magnificent tome published almost four hundred years ago and it is obvious from the clean pages and stiff binding that virtually no-one has touched it from the moment the proud collector first brought it home from the binder. Dutch publishers were pretty canny about this. They were very happy to source the large, expensive books which their customers wanted, but rather than bear the heavy investment costs and risk of publishing these books themselves, they often chose to import books of this sort from abroad. The large judicial tomes that lined the shelves of the nation's legal fraternity were generally printed in Lyon, Frankfurt or Paris, rather than Amsterdam or The Hague. For Dutch publishers the books that offered the most certain profits were texts that appealed to a wide public: these are the books that we will meet again and again in the chapters that follow. These were the books that readers carried



5 The scrap of paper containing the pepper is clearly recognisable as the page of an Amsterdam almanac. Books were often reused in this way, especially disposable texts like almanacs which were of no further use after the end of the year. In consequence, only a tiny fraction of those originally published survive.

around on their travels, that accompanied them to church on Sunday, and that they consulted every day; and they often read them to death. It is a strange paradox of this study that the books that were most valued by their owners at the time have often survived least well today. So our efforts to recover the lost books of the Dutch Golden Age is not as quixotic as it sounds – it is the absolute cornerstone of the investigation that follows.

ON MONEY, TIME AND DISTANCE

Before we go any further, we need to talk about money. In some places this might be thought a bit vulgar, but not in the Dutch Republic. In a society where the price of a book played a large part in defining its potential readership, some guidance on the costs of different titles, relative to other spending, is probably advisable.

The currency of Rembrandt's world (a commodity in which he so often found himself deficient) was the Dutch guilder (here, in the Dutch fashion, gulden). Each gulden was divided into 20 stuivers, and each stuiver into 8 duiten or 16 penningen. We won't meet the smallest unit, penningen, often in this book. Most printed texts cost at least a stuiver, the cost of a mug of beer: perhaps the cheapest pamphlets could be had for half a stuiver. But

quite a lot of books could be bought for 4 stuivers or less: short devotional works, catechisms, psalm books, school books, news pamphlets, newspapers, poems, songbooks and even some small-format Latin classics. As we will see, the trade in these sorts of books was the solid foundation of the Dutch book trade.

How would this relate to other household expenditures? In Leiden in 1598 a 12 lb loaf of rye bread cost 5 stuivers. People ate a lot of bread; fluctuations in price could cause real hardship, so price and quality were both carefully regulated by the government. A family of four might eat 5 lb of bread a day, which works out at 15 stuivers a week or 40 gulden a year. In an age when the drinking of water could be lethal, beer (usually relatively light) was also a necessity. Five stuivers would buy a dozen eggs. These of course were the essentials of life, as were, to different extents, clothes, pots and pans, and furniture. In many households, expenditure of this sort would take up most of the family's income. The average daily wage of an artisan in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic was around 20 stuivers; that of day labourers was lower, around 10–15 stuivers. Labourers would probably have been more interested in bread and beer than books; the sort of households that could contemplate expenditure on books needed to be making closer to the average annual household income in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, which is reckoned to be around 500 gulden.

Even in these households, there were plenty of other ways to spend spare money. Four stuivers would purchase a pint of ordinary red Bordeaux wine in an Amsterdam inn. An evening meal in the best tavern, accompanied by beer and wine, would cost 15 stuivers. A standing ticket at the theatre to see the latest play would cost 3 or 4 stuivers. In the second half of the century a cup of coffee in the newly fashionable coffeehouses would cost 1 stuiver; enjoying a smoke from a pre-filled pipe would be half that. Of course, none of these prices were fixed. In face-to-face transactions in the shop, the market stall or at the tavern, everything was negotiable. A naïve and amiable English traveller was likely to be charged rather more for his dinner than a local who knew the score. The price of wine, beer, shoes or pipes also depended on the quality.

Likewise with books. One of the reasons why so few publishers added prices to the lists of their stock in printed catalogues is that the price depended partly on the purchaser who might be a well-heeled collector who could be charged a premium rate, or an industry colleague looking for a deep discount. The best price information we have comes from the auction market, as a considerable number of catalogues have survived marked in the

margins with the amount of the successful bid. But even here we have to be aware that these prices were generally for bound books, so that price varied greatly depending on the quality of the binding, or, of course, on who was bidding that day. In bookshops, most new books were sold as loose sheets without binding, and it was up to the purchaser to have them bound. This normally meant taking them to a bookbinder, in a different shop. Sometimes the binding of the book would have cost more than the text itself.

What of the purchasers of books? Ministers of the Reformed Church, who often built a substantial library, were paid a basic salary of between 400 and 600 gulden a year. But this was often augmented by rent-free living, gifts of produce from parishioners and what they might earn from taking in lodgers or pupils. And this illuminates one important truth about income in this period: much of it was uncertain and irregular. Printers and booksellers, like all tradesmen, often allowed customers to buy on credit; chasing up these bills, particularly subscriptions to newspapers, would be a time-consuming and worrisome business. The grander the client, the more difficult it was to



6 Purchasing a book often involved a second, and expensive, trip to the bookbinder. It is no wonder that the recycling of bound texts through the auction market proved so popular.

obtain payment; but then sometimes settlement came with a generous premium. So income could be erratic, and it was these sorts of windfalls that often allowed households to indulge in something special, like a new carpet, a keg of beer or a book.

For those with larger incomes, the range of titles available was almost unlimited. The cheapest New Testament on offer could be obtained for a few stuivers, but the first edition of the new States Bible in 1637 would have cost the considerable sum of 27 gulden. Tales of the adventures of the great Dutch explorers were immensely popular, and you could pick up some, like the extraordinary story of Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, for about 4 stuivers. The elegant topographical surveys of Olfert Dapper, on the other hand, would have cost about 9 gulden apiece – these were intended for men of the regent class, well-rewarded professors with salaries of up to 2,000 gulden a year, jurists or doctors with a fashionable practice, or wealthy merchants.²⁰

In all of this, the size of a book mattered enormously. As a collector, you did not pay more to buy a book written by a popular author, for authors, sadly, made remarkably little from their books.²¹ The price of most books depended on the number of pages and the size of the page, with an extra premium for illustrations (particularly if these were engravings that had to be inserted separately). The print world had a technical vocabulary to deal with this. When a sheet of paper was put on the press it was generally about 40 cm by 30 cm in size. Unless intended as a broadsheet proclamation or advertisement to be pasted onto a wall, the text was set in two halves on the page and then folded. Folded once, it made four pages front and back, and books of this size, standing approximately 30 cm by 20 cm, were known as folios. These were the largest and more expensive books, often scholarly books in Latin, but also large chronicle histories, some medical encyclopaedias or collections of legal cases. In most households, the only folio they would own was the family Bible, but great scholarly collections, or the collections of leading magistrates, might have hundreds of folio books – as indeed, did the first university collections.

If the printed sheet was folded once more, each sheet, printed front and back, generated eight printed pages, and this was known as a quarto (4o). Folded one more time, you had an octavo (8o), and so on through the sizes, 16mo, 32mo and even a scarcely believable 64mo: at this point the type, and the book, were tiny. A more complex folding procedure generated books in duodecimo (12mo), 24mo and 48mo. Quartos and octavos made up the heart of the trade, which could encompass standard editions of the classics, play texts and political pamphlets (mostly in quarto), and religious texts

(often printed in octavo). All serious collectors of books knew to think in folio, quarto, octavo and duodecimo; the smaller formats were mostly curiosities. The famous Elzevier *Republics* were printed in 24mo, and remarkable largely for their typographical ingenuity.²² Standing only 4 inches tall, they are ideal for carrying about in a pocket but actually quite difficult to read, especially when tightly bound. Publishers' stock catalogues were mostly divided by subject (theology, jurisprudence, medicine) and then further divided by format: the folios first, and then so on down the formats.

Many types of books were printed in a range of formats, to cater for all pockets and incomes; Bibles, of course, but also staples of the trade such as collected works of the classical authors: a quarto edition, for study, might be four times the cost of a comfortable octavo, for reading. Franciscus Heerman's *Guldene Annotatien* (*Golden Annotations*), a hugely popular collection of classical proverbs and aphorisms, might cost 2 gulden and 10 stuivers in quarto, but the same work could be had for 15 stuivers in octavo. The Dutch book market was built largely by this willingness to cater for all tastes and all pockets. Publishers sometimes made a fortune, but they often started their working lives with little capital, living a hand-to-mouth existence. They knew what it was like to be bookish but poor, and this helped them read a market that was full of people willing to buy books, but only for the right price.

Like all European societies, the Dutch Republic was cash poor: there was just not enough coinage in circulation to lubricate the frantic commerce of a society like this. So much trading was done by exchange or partial exchange, and this was never truer than in the book trade, where books could be exchanged for paper, or for services. Schoolmasters might teach pupils for books, and scholars received books in return for help with proof-reading difficult texts. This is how some collectors with a relatively small nominal income, like ministers, could build unexpectedly large collections. Schoolmasters often wrote books as well, and sold them as textbooks to their pupils. When schoolmaster Anthony Smyters died in 1626, he had a considerable stock of his own book left, and the Amsterdam publisher Hendrick Laurensz snapped up forty-eight copies. He paid just over 2.5 stuivers per copy, and offered them in his next catalogue for 12 stuivers. Of such canny deals were fortunes made.²³

Many of the texts we will meet in this book could be obtained, or at least read, without any expenditure at all: the ordinances posted on the city gates, small pamphlets distributed on the streets, the dissertations and celebratory poems handed out at academic graduation ceremonies, the poems distributed at wedding feasts. In fact, we recently worked out that well over

half the print jobs turned out in the Dutch Republic's printing shops were never intended for retail sale at all.²⁴ All of these sorts of print find their place in this book, whether they are large tomes of several hundred pages, or single sheets, printed on one side only, to be posted up or offered to a tax payer as a receipt for payment.²⁵ There are very good reasons why this should be the case. The first can be summed up in a simple proposition: big books made reputations, but small books and broadsheets made money. Printers lived from this sort of jobbing work, paid for and delivered to a single customer, which posed none of the complex problems of recovering the investment cost from sales. Sometimes this sort of work generated the cash flow necessary to undertake bigger projects. And of course, for citizens of the Dutch Republic, this was exactly the sort of printed material that they would have access to every day, glued up on the city gates or passed out on the town square. It was often these sorts of print items that had most impact on their daily lives, informed them of an increase in the tax on beer or gave them the first intimation of a looming political crisis. This sort of mundane print has not been much studied, but it all contributed to the ubiquity of printed paper. It sustained a print industry that could scale the highest peaks of sophisticated work, but for the most part took easy profits from the market in cheap books.

We should not expect time to be such an issue, except for those Dutch citizens in our book who worked long days, and could not afford candles to read in the evenings. But the conflicts of the Reformation had left one large problem which continues to frustrate historians and no doubt posed a challenge for those whose trade crossed national borders. By the late sixteenth century it was increasingly clear that the calendar year introduced by the Romans (the Julian calendar) had drifted significantly out of alignment with the solar calendar. Since this impacted on the timing of Easter, it was the Pope, Gregory XIII, who in 1582 finally took the matter in hand. According to a papal decree, Thursday, 4 October 1582 was to be followed by the first day of the Gregorian calendar, Friday, 15 October 1582. Catholic countries quickly adopted the new calendar regime, but Protestant states were more reluctant to accede to the obliteration of ten days by papal decree.

A large part of the Low Countries adopted the Gregorian calendar immediately, including Holland and Zeeland; the five other provinces of the emerging Dutch Republic were more stubborn, using the old Julian calendar until 1700. Denmark and Prussia also adopted the new calendar in 1700, though England and Sweden, two Protestant nations that feature largely in

this story, held out until 1752 and 1753 respectively. So when William III of Orange's ship left port for the invasion of England in 1688 (Chapter 16 in this book), he set out on 11 November (NS, or New Style), and arrived in England on 5 November (OS, or Old Style). News from The Hague dated 14 June might appear in a newspaper dated several days earlier. The newsmen got used to calling attention to the difference: thus in this case the report from The Hague might be dated 4/14 June. You see this same system on diplomatic despatches from countries that still used the Old Style, that is, the Julian calendar. But this is certainly a complication we could have done without. In this book, all dates can be assumed to be New Style, as used in Holland, unless specified otherwise.

Distance is a happier story. The population of the Dutch Republic, despite massive immigration, was never much above 2 million in the seventeenth century. Almost half of these people lived in Holland, in a dense network of cities. Today, the cities of the Holland conurbation, or *Randstad*, seem almost to run into one another, and even in the seventeenth century, you could get from Amsterdam to Haarlem, on one of the hourly canal boat passenger services, in two hours. Travelling the much longer distance from Amsterdam to Rotterdam would take almost fourteen hours, and cost around 30 stuivers. The network of canals, completed by the mid-seventeenth century, and the regular services of barges, boats and coaches across the entire country, hugely facilitated the movement of news, information and correspondence, as well as a mass of printed matter. Barges were also a great place for gossip. If everyone in the Dutch Republic had an opinion, as foreign visitors often remarked, it was because this geographical connectedness made it possible. It facilitated much of what we see in this book, not least the growth of a vibrant culture of reading, public information and opinionated talk. This was certainly the most politically informed population in the whole of Europe. Very often, as we will see, its rulers might wish that this were not the case. But for the book world, it was an important, and hugely lucrative, fact of life.

PART I

A NEW REPUBLIC

CHAPTER ONE



Beginnings

IN THE AUTUMN OF 1580, a footsore tradesman named Louis Elzevier made his weary way through the gates of the city of Leiden. At the age of 33, Elzevier was no longer a young man, and he was definitely down on his luck. By this point he had tried virtually every occupation in the book trade: printer, bookseller, bookbinder. Even a period in the workshop of the famous publisher Christophe Plantin in Antwerp had not helped him find his feet; now after failed ventures in Liège and Douai he had turned his steps north to Leiden, a place of opportunity in the free north.

Even here he did not immediately succeed. A loan from his old employer Plantin hung like a sword of Damocles over his whole enterprise; when Plantin demanded repayment, Elzevier was forced to sell his house and shop to clear the debt. Happily, Louis had made himself sufficiently useful to the Leiden professors by buying books for them at the Frankfurt book fair that they were reluctant to see him made destitute. Frankfurt was at this point the centre of the European book world: publishers came from all over Europe to its twice-yearly sale, at Easter and in September, to buy, sell, gossip and inspect the latest typographical innovations. This was a market where looking at the work of other printing houses was as important as buying stock. So much so that one failing printer found redemption by supplying himself with baskets of spectacles which he hawked round the Frankfurt Fair. He did a roaring trade.¹ In the sixteenth century the Northern Netherlands, with its tiny book industry, had sent few representatives to the fair: of the non-German visitors, the publishers of Venice, Paris and Antwerp ruled the roost. Yet by the middle of the seventeenth century the power of Dutch money had vanquished all of these formerly proud competitors; by the end of the century the Frankfurt market was virtually derelict, and Amsterdam was the new bookshop of the world.

In the days when Louis Elzevier trekked back and forth to Frankfurt, all this lay in the future: Frankfurt was still the place where the new intellectual elites of Leiden and Amsterdam could find the best examples of European

book culture for their libraries. If Louis Elzevier had learned one thing from his bruising apprenticeship in the book world it was how to drive a hard bargain, and the professors, always careful with their money, were duly grateful. Louis was appointed beadle to the university, an office that opened his eyes to the business potential of academic printing. In an age when every student had to pay for the privilege of publishing the theses they would defend in a practice disputation, this was a large captive market, particularly if, as was the case in Leiden, students had to take their business to the university's appointed printer. Louis and his relatives also saw an opening in the new market in book auctions. When Louis died in 1617 he was not rich, but he was able at least to set up his sons and grandsons in the business.

We learn a lot from this one, not very successful career: a story of hope, repeated reinvention and the need to seize any opportunity that presented itself. This, in a nutshell, was the story of the Dutch Republic. And the story of how the small new state conquered the world of books is as extraordinary as the story of printing itself.

FEASTING ON THE CORPSE OF ANTWERP

When the northern province of Holland, rather to its surprise, became the new centre of resistance to Spanish rule in the Low Countries in 1572, the art of printing books with moveable type was a little over one hundred years old. When in 1452 it became known that Johannes Gutenberg had successfully resolved the problem of multiplying books by mechanical means, the impact on European culture was profound. Scholars heralded the invention as civilisation's new dawn, and Europe's governing elites hastened to obtain a working press for their cities.² But although the printing press spread quickly through Europe, the expansion of the book industry was not without problems. While Gutenberg had resolved the technical issues of printing with moveable type, it was by no means clear how all of these newly available books would find buyers. Print lacked a sustainable business model. Unsold copies piled up, and many of the first generation of printers, like Gutenberg, went bankrupt.

The problem of developing a sustainable business model for print would occupy the new industry for the best part of seventy years.³ Crucial to this process was the establishment of effective distribution networks, and developing new products for new customers outside the Latinate scholarly elites that had sustained the book market in the manuscript age. This emerging marketplace relied heavily on the consolidation of production in a string of

major commercial cities from Venice and Rome in the south, through Lyon and Germany, to Paris and Antwerp. By the middle of the sixteenth century Antwerp had become the northern metropolis of the European trade network, a teeming, sophisticated multilingual city of international merchants. Antwerp was now both the northern pole of Europe's international trade and the hub of the domestic economy of the Habsburg Netherlands. As such, it was naturally a major centre of printing, feeding off both the demand for Latin works for schools and scholarship, and a growing vernacular market in this, Europe's most urbanised and literate society.

At this stage the Northern Netherlands played a subsidiary role in this efflorescence of print culture. In the decade prior to the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt (1555–1565), twelve towns in the Northern Netherlands had at least one printing press, mostly either in Holland (Amsterdam, Delft, Haarlem, Leiden) or the great cities of the eastern provinces of Overijssel and Gelderland (Deventer, Kampen, Nijmegen, Zwolle). Print shops were also to be found in the Frisian cities of Franeker and Leeuwarden, in Utrecht, the largest ecclesiastical centre of the Northern Netherlands, and from 1563 in Vianen, an autonomous fiefdom of Hendrik van Brederode, which served as a hotbed of Protestant devotional works. But printing presses would disappear from Haarlem and Zwolle around 1565, and none of the others amounted to very much. For what became the miracle of the Dutch Republic required a sequence of improbable events. It demanded that the energies that had animated a Reformation in the cities of Flanders and Brabant should somehow be transferred to the north; and it required that Antwerp should somehow be humbled.

The Dutch Republic was essentially created in two moments. The first came in 1574, when the starving citizens of Leiden looked out over their walls, and saw to their astonishment that the besieging armies of Spain had vanished into the night. The second was a moment of defeat, when, in 1585, the Calvinist defenders of Antwerp, despairing of rescue, capitulated to the forces of the Duke of Parma. The first, the heroic victory, has naturally played a larger role in the historical pageant of the new Dutch state – the dogged resistance, the new dawn, the creation of a new state shaped by the steely fortitude of its Calvinist defenders. Go to Leiden on 3 October, and you will find the whole city in a festival of self-celebration. At the weighing house in the city centre you will still be served, for free, herring and white bread, the provisions distributed by the relieving forces to the starving population.

The relief of Leiden, against all odds, turned the revolt on its head. Within a year the Spanish armies, their resources sapped by a series of costly



7 A 1577 Leiden broadsheet announcing the foundation of an annual market to take place on 3 October in commemoration of the siege.

enervating sieges, had run out of money. Mutinous unpaid troops descended on Antwerp and took their money the traditional way, by sacking the city. Christophe Plantin, the greatest printer of his age, was forced to ransom his property three times to prevent the business premises (now the great Plantin-Moretus Museum) being burned to the ground. The seventeen provinces of the Netherlands decided to put aside their differences to secure the removal of the Spanish troops. For a brief moment, between 1576 and 1579, it seemed as if the seventeen provinces might have a united future in a new state, free of Spanish rule. But it was not to be. The new sense of purpose that united the provinces did not extend beyond securing the removal of the Spanish soldiers. Once this was achieved, old jealousies came once more to the surface, exacerbated not least by the new militancy of the Calvinist defenders of the north. For the Calvinist leaders of the resistance now exercised considerable influence in the Holland cities; a process consolidated in

1578 when Amsterdam, until this point loyal to Spain, joined the revolt. More provocatively, Calvinist regimes also briefly established control of key cities in the south, in Bruges, Ghent and Antwerp, further unnerving those who hoped for reconciliation between the contending religious parties.⁴

The revolt in Holland from 1572 onwards had already stimulated a considerable movement of peoples, mostly, in these years, of Calvinist exiles returning from England and Germany, to join the struggle against Spain. Increasingly, however, this movement was reinforced by a new surge of immigration directly from the southern provinces. The pace of immigration, already significant in the 1570s, intensified in the early 1580s as the Duke of Parma began his campaign to reduce the remaining citadels of rebellion in the south. The capitulation of Bruges and Ghent in 1583 and 1584 opened the road to Antwerp, and the duke now turned his attention to the biggest prize of all. When desperate efforts to resupply the beleaguered city were thwarted, it became increasingly apparent that Antwerp was doomed.

Doomed but not defeated. The Duke of Parma now faced a difficult calculation. If the population had chosen to hold out, the final subjugation might have cost many casualties and the rampaging army might have done untold damage to the city's economic prospects. The heroic resistance of Leiden, and the subsequent sack of Antwerp, were both too fresh in the memory to be ignored. All things considered, for the reflective Parma a negotiated settlement was best.

The terms of capitulation were generous. The Protestant inhabitants of the city were subjected to no immediate persecution. Rather they were allowed three years either to conform, or to sell up and leave. Many thousands chose the second option. Over the next years they methodically liquidated their assets and followed Louis Elzevier on the long trek north.

This mass immigration would totally reshape the character of the new Dutch state. By the time that the Dutch and Spanish concluded a first grudging ceasefire, the Twelve Years' Truce of 1609, the character of the north had been completely transformed. Between 1580 and 1620 it is estimated that approximately 100,000 Southern Netherlanders moved to the north. All of the major Holland towns registered a phenomenal increase in their population and in their economic activity. In 1622, a third of Amsterdam's population was born in the Southern Netherlands or had Southern Netherlandish parents.⁵ Only 44 per cent of men marrying in Leiden in the 1640s were born in the Republic.⁶ All of this had a profound influence on the character and social make-up of the new state; and nowhere was this transformation more complete than in the printing industry.

Here, the new Dutch state truly profited from the misfortune of the south. Simply enumerating those printers and booksellers we know because they are named on the imprints of books, we can document at least 168 Southern Netherlandish booksellers and printers who settled in the north between 1570 and 1630. Most settled in the major cities of Holland: 44 in Amsterdam, 19 in Delft, 23 in Dordrecht, 35 in Leiden and 12 in Rotterdam, as well as 13 in Middelburg in Zeeland.⁷ By 1609, at the start of the Twelve Years' Truce and the end of the first phase of the Eighty Years' War, there would be twenty-nine towns in the Northern Netherlands with a printing press. Many more print workers were among the unknown artisan tradesmen who left no imprint on the records. When Paulus Aerts van Ravesteyn set up his business in Leiden to print the new States Bible in 1636, all of his workforce were immigrants from the south.⁸

These new workers were valued not only for their energy and work ethic, but for their high degree of technical skill. By the third quarter of the sixteenth century Antwerp was recognised as the leading centre of typographical excellence in northern Europe. Plantin's workshop was known throughout the continent, but there were other shops with an advanced technical proficiency in Antwerp, Louvain, Ghent and Brussels. This expertise was transferred wholesale to the north.

Plantin himself, typically, chose to hedge his bets. He elected to remain in Antwerp, but set up a branch office in Leiden, where Plantin-branded books could be published, and from where his Antwerp stock could be distributed and sold. For a time his northern shop was honoured with the official business of the newly founded University of Leiden. This was characteristic of a wider phenomenon, for the magistrates of the Holland towns almost invariably appointed one of the new arrivals as their official printer. This was both a means of providing some measure of financial support as the new presses became established, and securing for their own official publication a befitting quality and grandeur.⁹ As we will see, this work for institutional customers provided the solid underpinnings of the economics of the print industry: working first for the state, the cities and the provincial States, and then the institutions of higher education.

This ransacking of the intellectual culture of the south was less savage than the sack of Antwerp in 1576, but ultimately far more devastating. Antwerp would never recover its sixteenth-century eminence; the rulers of the free north ensured this would be so by obstructing the passage of ships down the River Scheldt to Antwerp through the estuaries of Zeeland, now in rebel hands. The great harbour of Antwerp was now effectively redundant. But this

was more than an economic blow: the movement north encompassed not only technicians and investors, such as those who revitalised the northern print industry, but also scholars and intellectuals. Many of the major figures influential in the cultural rebirth of the north were southerners by origin. These included, to choose just a representative sample, Franciscus Gomarus, professor of theology at Leiden, and protagonist in the Remonstrant controversy; the mathematician Simon Stevin; Carolus Clusius, botanist and curator of the new botanical gardens at the University of Leiden; the iron entrepreneur Louis de Geer; the painter Karel van Mander, and many other scholars, professors and ministers. The new Dutch state valued its intellectuals. Carolus Clusius was required to be at his botanical gardens one hour a day, to answer any questions students might have, and for this he was paid the royal sum of 750 gulden a year. But Clusius was no slouch. His rather minimal duties provided the time and leisure for ground-breaking research, which was then magnificently realised on the new Dutch printing presses. This alliance between leading scholars and their publishers was one of the defining features of the new state. Apart from their texts, the scholars also provided essential services in the print shop: advice, copy-editing, proofreading, sourcing copy texts. It was thanks to this influx of intellectual talent, reinforced by a flow of international recruits attracted by Leiden's reputation as the rising northern star of Protestant learning, that Holland's printers would ultimately secure their enviable reputation for excellence in learned typography.

The new men from the south were not always a comfortable presence. For every one who successfully sold up and moved their capital north, there were many who arrived almost destitute. Many left friends and family behind them: they knew what they had sacrificed for their faith, and the hope of a new life. Many continued to hope that the Dutch armies would one day recapture their former homes and allow for a safe return. This irredentist fervour added a sharp tone to Dutch public life that often shaped its politics. The southern incomers were among the most passionate supporters of military action and the House of Orange, and the sternest and most vengeful critics of unorthodox Protestants. But if not always the easiest neighbours, the incomers from the south provided a focused vitality and a determination to make a success of the new state that were among its most vital sources of energy.

UNDER THE HAMMER

The development of the Dutch book trade is also the story of the Elzeviers. The Elzeviers are remarkable partly for their success in associating

themselves with some of the most creative innovations of the Dutch seventeenth century: the auction market; the literary duodecimos of Abraham and Bonaventura Elzevier; Daniel Elzevier's exceptional 1674 stock catalogue. They gained international acclaim as the publishers of Galileo and Descartes. But, as so often in the world of Dutch books, it was the unglamorous part of the market that earned the real money, rather than the prestige projects that have so impressed posterity. Publishing dissertation theses for reluctant students became the cornerstone of the Leiden business, a monopoly greedily defended for the best part of a century. And the critical book trade development was not a particular project, but a change in the nature of selling: the birth of the book auction.

Books had been sold at auction throughout the sixteenth century, in Holland a trade managed by the deacons of the poor. But when Louis Elzevier marshalled a sale of the books of the Dutch statesman Philips van Marnix van Sint-Aldegonde in 1599, this was one of the first occasions on which books had been the exclusive purpose of an auction sale, and almost certainly the first when the sale was accompanied by a published catalogue.¹⁰ We cannot be certain this was the first printed auction catalogue, because many were issued which no longer survive today; the full extent of this market is only now beginning to emerge, not least as a result of the work undertaken for this book. But we can be certain that it played a transforming role in the Dutch book trade.

The adoption of the auction allowed Dutch publishers to solve the major problem that had hamstrung the business of books from the first age of print: the accumulation of vast stocks of surplus and ultimately unsaleable copies. Here, in a nutshell, was the paradox of print. If you were publishing a pamphlet, you could be conservative in your estimate of a print run, because if it sold unexpectedly well it was relatively straightforward to set up the type for a work of eight pages and print it off again. Furthermore, with a pamphlet the market was likely to be local: you would sell most of your copies without having to distribute them further afield. With large Latin scholarly books, the economics were more daunting. The book took far longer to print, and the market was likely to be spread across Europe. And the compositor, the man who put together the individual letters into the frame ready for the page to be printed off, was the best-paid worker in the print shop. So to underestimate the demand, and have to go through this same process again to print off a few hundred extra copies, was also expensive. Underestimating demand for a large expensive book meant losing valuable income; to overestimate demand meant having hundreds of copies

sitting in the warehouse, incurring storage costs and gradually deteriorating through the ravages of dust, damp and mice. By the end of the sixteenth century the accumulated bad decisions of publishers of these weighty tomes had crammed Europe's warehouses. When a Lyon publisher of Latin legal texts was murdered in the 1580s, his remaining stock amounted to a million sheets in the Lyon store, and a further million in the warehouse of his Spanish shop. Some of this remaining stock was now so old that it had to be knocked down as waste paper to be used in stuffing the bindings of books or wrapping vegetables (or worse).¹¹ Operating at this end of the market was a licence to lose money.

So far no-one had worked out how to mitigate these risks – until the Dutch came up with the book auction. The auction was a classic Dutch invention: it allowed the Dutch book trade to circulate surplus stock and thereby spread risk. Crucially, it was a cash trade in a business that traditionally functioned largely by credit and exchange. Problems of temporary liquidity could be handled by a swift auction sale to raise cash and spread stock around the trade: this gave rise to a special sort of auction, confined exclusively to members of the book trade, known as *sorteringen*. The classic auction, of course, was the sale of distinguished, and sometimes not so distinguished, private collections. Here too there was money to be made for book trade professionals. Many booksellers also doubled as auctioneers, taking a decent percentage (between 5 and 12 per cent) from the sums raised.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, book auctions came to have an enormous importance for the smooth functioning of the Dutch book market. Publishers and booksellers used book auctions to manage their stock, or to liquidate stock after the death or retirement of a former bookseller. Buyers could invest in building a collection secure in the knowledge that after their deaths their families would be able to realise the value in an auction sale. The Dutch seem to have been remarkably unsentimental about this. Families disposed of collections lovingly assembled during a lifetime of study or professional activity without evident regret: often, in the case of the heirs, preferring to build their own library rather than give space to the taste of a previous generation. They too would buy at auction. Buying in this way had the great advantage that the books would already be bound. In this period most new titles would be sold as unbound sheets, necessitating a separate visit to the bookbinder before the book was ready for use. Bidding at auction offered the additional possibility of obtaining a book previously owned by a distinguished scholar, statesman or minister. Books annotated by the most famous scholars in the Republic often commanded a considerable price premium.

Most auctions were accompanied by a printed catalogue, and these too came to play an important role in the Dutch book world. Those responsible for the sale, the family of the deceased or the bookseller acting for them, made sure that the catalogue was distributed through the book trade well in advance of the date of the auction. The newly established weekly newspapers also played their part, advertising the date of the auction and listing the booksellers who held copies of the printed catalogue. In the case of the largest sales, or the most celebrated collections, the catalogue was published sufficiently far in advance that they could be distributed overseas. Almost as remarkable as this network of distribution is the afterlife of many of these catalogues. The catalogues of the most famous collectors were themselves assiduously collected. For those seeking to build their own library they were prized as reference works, a guide to what a sophisticated collector would aspire to own, and where the latest editions had been published. In this way sales catalogues also found a place on the shelves of a library. It is noteworthy that five times as many seventeenth-century auction catalogues can be found today in libraries abroad than survive in Dutch collections.¹²

In the decades after the sale of the Van Marnix collection, booksellers were feeling their way: testing the effectiveness of auctions for realising the full value of their stock and monitoring the impact on other traditional methods of sale. But by the mid-1630s auctions were an established feature of the landscape. Leiden, The Hague and Amsterdam became the centres of this new trade: here sales took place on a weekly basis. Auctions in Utrecht and Groningen provided opportunities for local university students to cycle their books back into the market, and most of the Holland cities staged auctions at some point in the century. Precisely how many sales were held in the course of the century is difficult to establish. A comprehensive search of the world's libraries has turned up about 1,900 surviving catalogues for the seventeenth century, but there were certainly many more. When we read through the advertisements placed in Dutch newspapers, we find notices of several hundred additional sales, for which the catalogues have not survived. This being the Dutch Republic, the municipal governors took pains to ensure that the auction market was tightly regulated. Those wishing to hold an auction had first to obtain permission, and pay a fee. Where these records are consulted, they too provide extra information on auctions for which no catalogue survives.

All told, we can now document something in the region of 4,000 auctions known to have taken place in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. At least 4 million books were circulated through the market in this way. This is

not only a testament to the vitality of the Dutch economy, it also provides a goldmine of information for those seeking to recreate the reading culture of the Dutch Golden Age. When you compare the books listed in the auction catalogues with the stock of the world's libraries today, you discover many items that cannot be matched to a surviving copy. This is not really a surprise. About a third of the books published in Europe before 1700 survive in only a single copy today. If this is the case, it is a mathematical certainty that many must have disappeared altogether: the auction catalogues, and catalogues of booksellers' stock, give us the opportunity to discover them anew.

When Elzevier and his heirs first experimented with sales by auction, they were thinking of new ways to make money in the business of books, and in this they triumphantly succeeded. What they cannot have known is that through the printed records of this trade, they would leave a precious, unique and indispensable window onto the reading taste of this most bookish society.

THE MASTER OF AMSTERDAM

Over the course of the seventeenth century the laurel wreaths of celebrity in the Dutch book world would be bestowed on the families Elzevier and Blaeu: the Elzeviers for their canny marketing of small-format editions of the classics, the Blaeus for their brilliant atlases. But the true innovator – the man who set Amsterdam on its way to primacy in the Dutch book world – was a far less celebrated figure, Cornelis Claesz. Like many other booksellers and printers in the seventeenth-century book world, Claesz was born in the Southern Netherlands (most likely in Louvain), sometime between 1546 and 1551. He was an early convert to the Calvinist movement, resulting in a period of exile in Emden and Cologne. When the revolt took root in 1572, Claesz settled in Enkhuizen, a small port town in northern Holland with close links to the Emden exile community; by this point he was in his mid- to late twenties. In 1578, when Amsterdam turned to the rebel side, Claesz was among the first wave of printers and booksellers to move to the city – we know he arrived within weeks of Amsterdam's abandonment of its stubborn allegiance to Spain. Claesz took premises 'on the water', the modern Damrak, at the harbour and at the heart of Amsterdam's commercial quarter, and began to build his business.

Between 1578 and his death in 1609 Claesz would publish more than 460 titles. Most of these works were printed for him by others, many of them outside Amsterdam: indeed, Claesz did not immediately establish a press at

his premises. His truly innovative contribution to the transformation of the Dutch book world was to conceive this new publishing model, creating a network of connections that tapped the latent energies of the fellow immigrant printers established in other Dutch cities, and at the same time supplying the expanding market with a huge number of imported titles from Europe's major centres of printing. These two developments, together, set Amsterdam on its course as a global marketplace for books.

One of his first works was a dictionary in four languages, Dutch, French, Spanish and Italian.¹³ This was a typically shrewd business move, for the Dutch book world was always multilingual, serving not only the scholarly Latin market and the local Dutch population, but separate French- and German-language communities, as well as substantial communities of Italian merchants and Iberian refugees. With this book Claesz was also laying claim to the mantle of Antwerp, for this was precisely the sort of work that would have been published in a large number of editions in that most cosmopolitan of cities. Over the following years, Claesz would publish mostly in Dutch, in an expanding range of genres. Religious texts, as ever, provided the solid ballast and the cash flow to expand his business. But Claesz was also an innovator. He played a significant role in establishing the Dutch genre of travel journals, and the Dutch publication of atlases. He published numerous maps and navigational manuals, establishing a market for which Willem Jansz



8 Cornelis Claesz is the middle figure of the top row. The compass in his hand alludes to his interest in navigation, which stimulated several of his most ground-breaking publications. His membership of the local militia company demonstrated how successfully this former immigrant had integrated into the Amsterdam community.

Blaeu and his descendants would later take the major plaudits. Claesz also published numerous news pamphlets and political tracts, reporting generously on Protestant successes in the Low Countries, England and Germany. He was an innovator in the news market, which would be further transformed in the decade after Claesz's death by the invention of the newspaper.¹⁴

Claesz demonstrated that in a growing city, with a teeming population of new inhabitants all keen to make their fortunes, it was possible to make some serious money from the business of books. Already in 1585, seven years after his move to Amsterdam, he was the second wealthiest bookseller in Amsterdam – only the Commelijn publishing house, with its international branches in Frankfurt and Heidelberg, was worth more. At the time of Claesz's death in 1609 he was worth at least 50,000 gulden.¹⁵

Cornelis Claesz's most distinctive contribution to the organisation of the new industry was his establishment of a network of printers turning out the books that would be published under his name. This network included not only colleagues in the Amsterdam book industry, but spread far beyond the boundaries of the city to Leiden, Rotterdam, Harlingen, Alkmaar, Middelburg, Dordrecht, The Hague, Franeker, Haarlem, Hoorn, Woerden, Utrecht and Delft. In the mid-1590s Claesz also ran a second shop in the North Holland city of Hoorn. These cooperative publications played a crucial role, not only in establishing the Amsterdam print industry but in creating a new Dutch model for a national print culture. This model would eventually comprise two nodal centres, Leiden and Amsterdam, served by a network of print shops established in smaller towns. Thanks to Holland's excellent and fast-expanding transport network, these places were all sufficiently close for their printers to work with publishers in the major conurbations.

Publishers in these smaller towns would also cultivate their own local markets, as would printers in a third, outer ring of book culture in the other provinces, cities such as Groningen, Arnhem in Gelderland and Middelburg in Zeeland. In these places local institutions such as the church, state and universities provided a large proportion of the work that allowed publishers to make a living. Naturally it was Leiden and especially Amsterdam that dominated the international market. In the first decades, as we see with Claesz, this international trade involved largely the provision of books from abroad, but this was gradually augmented by a new arm of business, the export or re-export of these books to subsidiary markets in England, Scandinavia and to the larger markets in Germany and places further east. For this was the second essential characteristic of the market built by Claesz and



9 Gerardus Mercator was one of the great pioneers of European cartography, and Cornelis Claesz made his name with this superb edition of Mercator's atlas.

his Amsterdam successors: that they would not waste effort, or risk investment capital, printing books that could just as easily be imported from abroad. Claesz traded many books with the Plantin office in Antwerp: in 1609 half of the books which the Plantin-Moretus firm sold to Dutch booksellers went to Claesz in Amsterdam.¹⁶ He also made regular visits to the Frankfurt Fair to buy books to sell on in Amsterdam.

In the first decades, as the new industry was still in its infancy, imports accounted for a large proportion of the books on sale, as we can see clearly enough from a series of printed stock catalogues issued from the Amsterdam shop towards the end of Claesz's life.¹⁷ Here again Claesz was an innovator: his were the first publishers' stock catalogues issued in the new Dutch state. His first series of catalogues was published in 1604, of his Latin stock (1,966 titles), his German books (434 titles), and a smaller list of 129 books he had brought back from the Frankfurt Fair. We can see how quickly his business

expanded in the years that followed from a new series of five catalogues published between 1608 and 1610 advertising separately his Latin, Dutch, French and German stock, with a fifth list dealing exclusively with his prints and cartographical material. Interestingly, this catalogue of prints and maps was printed with prices.¹⁸ This was extremely unusual in the seventeenth-century book world. Usually publishers liked to reserve the right to charge different prices to different sorts of customers. Industry colleagues would expect a steep discount; the naïve wealthy customer could be charged a substantial premium. So if book sales catalogues included prices, they are normally the prices raised at auctions, added by hand after the event.

Of these five catalogues, only the catalogue of Dutch books has a title-page. This was the last to be issued, after Claesz's death, and it was clearly intended that the others could be gathered up with it to form part of the sale of his remaining stock. Put together in this way they united the established Latin market for scholarly books with new vernacular markets that the Dutch Republic would develop so aggressively over the following decades.

The extent and range of the stock in these catalogues is impressive: a total of more than five thousand titles. Over the course of the century a whole host of publishers would follow Claesz's lead in advertising their stock in this way, and we will make much use of these catalogues in this book: not least to identify titles which do not seem to have survived, and certainly cannot be tracked down in any of the world's libraries. For analytical purposes, it must be said, the records in Claesz's catalogues leave a lot to be desired, as they identify places of publication only sporadically, and seldom date the edition being offered for sale. Perhaps at this stage of the development of the Dutch market the particular edition was not so material: Claesz's clients were most focused on obtaining copies of the texts and did not care particularly from what part of the European book market Claesz had sourced such books. Much of the stock at the final auction sale would go to fellow publishers building up their own stock now they no longer had to compete with Claesz, and they could be expected to know the books well. A wide choice of competing editions of particular texts would only become available as the century wore on; this indeed was one of the characteristic signs of the increasing sophistication of the Dutch market.

Not surprisingly, over half his stock was made up of books in Latin: always, even in the seventeenth century, the bedrock of the print industry, with guaranteed customers in the scholarly, medical and judicial professions. Latin would remain the language of higher education until deep into the eighteenth century, and a command of Latin letters (and a shared interest

in Latin literature) was a defining shared characteristic of the Dutch ruling class. Claesz's catalogue leads off with an extensive selection of the Protestant Church fathers, including Calvin, Beza, Bullinger and their lieutenants. No stock catalogue would ever use this arrangement again, and it is fair to say that these inherited patriarchs would never hereafter play such a large role in the Dutch book world, as Dutch Calvinism spawned its own authoritative interpreters of theology. But the assembling of such an extraordinary range of theological literature, from Zurich and Geneva as well as the rising centres of German theology such as Herborn, gives us a sense of the enormous energy and earnestness powering the birth of this new religious society. It also bears witness to the determination of the Calvinist ministers to place themselves at the heart of this new world, a zeal which rendered even more tragic and bitter the calamitous fall-out of the theological disputes that would sunder the Dutch Church in the decade following the publication of Claesz's catalogues.¹⁹

Claesz also offered for sale a considerable selection of Catholic theology, and this too would be a characteristic aspect of the Dutch book market. Large theological texts made their way to the Netherlands from Paris, Cologne and Antwerp, a trade that the political and religious controversies of the century did little to diminish. Certainly, this inward trade was far larger by volume than the supply of books published in the Netherlands travelling in the opposite direction. The import trade, from both Paris and Geneva, is also prominently on display in the catalogue of French books. Like the Latin list, this also offered a wide array of the theological classics of the French Calvinist movement, along with the polemics of the French Wars of Religion. Rather less predictable were the separate sections of books on arithmetic and navigation, placed here before small sections on law and medicine, the noble academic disciplines that almost invariably follow theology in the hierarchy of scholarship, canonised in the book world by the catalogues of the Frankfurt Fair. But Claesz was always keen to experiment: each of the catalogues has a different subdivision of genres, and in the case of the German books no section on law at all. Books in German would not be a huge part of the Dutch book market, but steady sales, not least to the large population of immigrants from Germany who sought work in the booming new state, justified keeping stock. The large section of medical books provided access to texts of which there was not yet a Dutch edition.

It is with the Dutch catalogue, the last to be published, that we get the clearest sense of the development of the vernacular trade in books. Despite the attention paid to spectacular works of scholarship and technical expertise

such as the Blaeu atlases, it was the Dutch market that provided one of the most solid underpinnings of the industry, and the safest promise of quick profits for those seeking to build a business. Claesz's Dutch catalogue shows how well he understood this new world of prosperous burghers and aspiring tradesmen, where the rich selection of theological books was enhanced by a wide array of books for all pockets and all occasions. There is a large selection of school books for those attending the vernacular schools favoured by those not seeking to pursue a Latin education, and a range of arithmetical primers for those in business. Claesz also picks out books in rhyme and songbooks for a separate section, for this was a society that valued leisure as well as work. The French, German and Dutch catalogues all contain extensive selections of literature, poetry and songbooks, a part of the market that would grow more important as the prosperity of the Republic left an ever-expanding section of the population with money in their pockets to expend on leisure pursuits. Seen together, the stock catalogues testify to a book world that was even at this early stage bursting with vitality and potential for the future.

Cornelis Claesz set the tone of the Dutch book trade of the Golden Age by cultivating a clientele of professional, middling book buyers as much as the traditional book-buying elite.²⁰ He also played a decisive role in the careers of many of those who would follow after, and develop these different parts of the business. Many of the future greats of Dutch publishing worked as apprentices in Claesz's shop, including Hendrick Laurensz, Jan Jansz Orlers and Dirk Pietersz Pers. When Claesz died in 1609 his premises were taken over by Hendrick Laurensz, who would go on to build one of the great publishing houses of Amsterdam in the 1630s and 1640s. We also know that Willem Jansz Blaeu bought heavily at the auction of the stock of Claesz, profiting from the opportunity to establish the leading role in the provision of navigational and cartographical publishing that would make his reputation.²¹

The titles listed in the stock catalogues tell us much about the book world of the Dutch Republic, and how it would develop. They show that Claesz could already command a diverse market of scholars and students, ministers and university professors, as well as curious and interested citizens and practitioners learning a trade or building a business. These categories of buyers, along with the needs of institutional customers, would continue to form the solid bedrock of the domestic book market. The catalogues also make clear that already, by this early date in the century, the Republic's publishers and printers, most of them newly transplanted from the south, had developed both the business infrastructure and innovative selling mechanisms that would allow the industry to expand and thrive. The stock

catalogues and the institutionalisation of the book auction created the most sophisticated ways of circulating stock and spreading risk in the European book world. The vitality of the Dutch economy, and the increasing spending power of its citizens, did the rest. Neither Cornelis Claesz nor Louis Elzevier would live to see the full flowering of the industry they had helped create. But as Claesz built his business and experimented with the best way to present his stock, and as Louis Elzevier grumbled through the last decade of a truculent life, they also offered their customers, even at this stage of the life of the young country, a vision of its future.

CHAPTER TWO



A Poisonous Peace

JOHAN VAN OLDENBARNEVELT WAS the leader of an ungrateful country. He had served the province of Holland for thirty-two years as Pensionary, its chief official, and had played a decisive role in the formation of the Dutch Republic as an independent state. As a young man he had fought at Haarlem and Leiden, turning the tide against Spain. A persuasive orator and a brilliant administrator, Oldenbarnevelt had emerged in the 1590s as the voice of not only Holland, but of the entire country.

Now, on 20 April 1618, he was forced to defend himself against base accusations, distributed across the country in printed pamphlets. His opponents had been tormenting him in this manner for some time: pieces like the *Noodtwendigh Discours* (*Necessary Discourse*) and the *Practijcke van den Spaenschen Raedt* (*Practice of the Spanish Council*), which persuaded their readers that Oldenbarnevelt was destroying the union and selling the country back to Spain. Oldenbarnevelt remarked to the States of Holland that these pamphlets, and many others, were 'false, seditious and calumnious libels . . . affecting not only me, and all loyal servants of the province and cities, but also your High Mightinesses'.¹ The regents had repeatedly announced strict prohibitions against such subversive texts, but they sold well, and there were plenty of printers who found their local magistrates willing to turn a blind eye. In fact, as Oldenbarnevelt knew, some magistrates even provided them with the content of the scurrilous texts.

His enemies had left him little choice but to respond. For years Oldenbarnevelt had been content to keep himself out of the limelight. Like any good regent, he concluded deals beyond the inquisitive eye of the public, never offering an insight into the deliberations or discussions taking place within the closed chambers of the Binnenhof, the central government complex in The Hague. There was nothing unusual about this: a harmonious state required trust between its rulers and citizens. But by 1618 trust in Oldenbarnevelt's qualities had been defiled in public by his enemies, and the ageing regent had to defend himself. Oldenbarnevelt's *Remonstrantie*,

submitted formally in writing to the States of Holland, was printed in four editions by Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw, the printer of the States. For the first time Oldenbarnevelt addressed the nation in his own voice, rather than as an officer of the States.

It was too late. Four months later Oldenbarnevelt was arrested by the officers of the States General, on the instigation of his former ally, Stadhouder Maurice of Nassau. The Stadhouder, although nominally a servant of the provincial States, wielded considerable executive power, reinforced by his office as Captain-General of the armed forces; the office was now customarily held by the head of the House of Orange, heir to the great hero of the Dutch Revolt, William the Silent. Oldenbarnevelt's principal supporters, including Hugo Grotius, the nation's leading scholar and public intellectual, were also arrested, while across the country magistrates sympathetic to Oldenbarnevelt were replaced by supporters of his opponents. A new flurry of popular pamphlets, most notably the *Provisionele Openinghe* (*Provisional Opening*) and the *Gulden Legende van den Nieuwen St Jan* (*Golden Legend of the New St John*), made Oldenbarnevelt's public remonstrance a laughing stock.

PAMPHLET TROUBLES

The 70-year old Pensionary was the loser in the Dutch Republic's first existential crisis. This was a perfect storm of confessional division, international tension and political dogmatism, a crisis that had gathered ever since the young Republic had gained its first sure footing as an independent state. On one side stood most Calvinist ministers, aided and abetted by thousands of Protestant refugees who had left their homes in Flanders, Brabant and the French-speaking Netherlands, often in difficult circumstances. The north had allowed them to rebuild their lives and often their fortunes, but they did not forget, or forgive. They pressed for a renewal of war suspended by the Twelve Years' Truce of 1609, a truce negotiated by the pragmatic elites in charge of the largest Holland towns. They found their champion in Stadhouder Maurice, who had fought the Spanish to a standstill to establish the new state, but now found himself politically marginalised by Oldenbarnevelt, the citizen lords of Holland and Utrecht, and their allies in the clergy, the so-called Remonstrants.

By 1609 the Dutch Republic was an undeniable political entity. The fledgling rebel provinces of the 1570s and 1580s had coalesced into a powerful state. The military campaigns of Prince Maurice had secured the borders of

the Dutch provinces, while the political leadership of Oldenbarnevelt had transformed a wartime economy into a flourishing society. But this free Dutch state, a confederal union of seven provinces, was an unplanned endeavour. Few had anticipated the consequences which resulted from the iconoclastic riots forty years earlier. The Netherlanders who rebelled against Habsburg authority did so not to institute political revolution, but to preserve ancient, conservative political privileges. The reaction of the Spanish crown, and the bitterness of the ensuing conflict, drove the rebels to turn to ever more radical solutions. Within a decade, the rebel provinces had changed from defending royal authority to declaring themselves sovereign. By the early 1600s the rebels had created a safe bulwark, but now that they found themselves secured by a temporary peace, the statesmen, preachers and, crucially, the publishers of the Dutch Republic would fight over the constitution and course of their new state.

The conflict which engulfed the Dutch Republic during the Twelve Years' Truce was a dangerous concoction of religious, political and economic tensions. It was also a struggle which was fought out largely in the public eye. Debate raged in churches, in universities, in taverns and on market squares. But what struck observers on all sides was the ubiquity of printed pamphlets, and the extraordinary freedom of pamphleteers in discussing affairs of church and state. Pamphlets could be found everywhere, bought in shops and distributed in public spaces. It was the extreme allegations raised in pamphlets which had prompted Oldenbarnevelt to defend himself in his *Remonstrantie* in April 1618. Many of his colleagues considered it a dangerous decision, because it only fed the power of the anonymous pamphleteers and exposed the Pensionary to a renewed bout of accusations.

Oldenbarnevelt had been goaded into action by his pamphleteering enemies, but it was hard to see how he could have done otherwise. Pamphleteering and public debate were at the heart of Dutch political culture. The Dutch Revolt was one of the first European conflicts in which print had played a considerable role as a medium of publicity. The rebels had keenly exploited the distribution of pamphlets, posters, engravings and songs for their cause.² But now that the Dutch state was a reality, it proved impossible to abandon the communication strategies adopted during the dark days of the early struggle. As soon as talk of a truce became widely known, supporters and opponents aired their opinions in printed pamphlets.³ Public debate continued for several years, to the frustration of many statesmen. The aristocratic regents who dominated the city councils and provincial States considered the discussion of affairs of state their

privilege, and not one to be shared beyond their decorous assembly rooms. Pamphleteering subverted the authority of the state, and placed the good governance of the country at risk. Strict edicts prohibited the publication and sale of political pamphlets, and the regents issued repeated warnings to their citizens.⁴

The regulations did little to stem the tide of pamphlets: not only because they proved difficult to enforce, but because the regents and their supporters themselves eagerly disseminated their viewpoints in public whenever it suited them to do so. Many of the anonymous pamphleteers who wrote for or against the truce in 1607 and 1608, or who wrote against Oldenbarnevelt ten years later, were public officeholders themselves, or had close connections to the state. The hypocrisy of statesmen issuing stern ordinances against pamphleteering while indulging in the same act for political gain was deeply entrenched, and never formally acknowledged by the leaders of the young Republic. And even the most resolute critic of the media storm recognised that pamphlets had a role to play. The author of the *Provisionele Openinghe*, attacking Oldenbarnevelt, defended his role as pamphleteer by invoking the success of his predecessors who wrote against Spain: ‘How many good and beneficial writings were published anonymously by the best patriots during the days of the first troubles?’⁵

It was a convincing argument, but not one employed by many. Most pamphleteers justified their publications by blaming other pamphleteers. They wished they had never had the urge to publish their writings, but they felt forced to issue public responses to the printed accusations made by their opponents. Oldenbarnevelt’s son-in-law Cornelis van der Mijle spoke of being forced to ‘follow a road opened’ to printed debate.⁶ Once a few pamphlets had appeared, others felt licensed to join in. The author of the pamphlet *Den Vraegh-al* (*The Questioner*), writing under the motto ‘Necessity surpasses law’, explained to his readers why he too had committed his opinion to the press:

Here I come too, another scribbler with a pamphlet, as if there weren’t enough already. But why not? For I observed that each and every one was busy writing and composing books, including the cripple and the blind . . . what would prevent me, I thought, from bringing a little book into the world also?⁷

Another pamphleteer justified himself in 1617 by stating that ‘the privileges of the inhabitants of these lands are great, but that one man should have the

advantage to say what he wants to say, without hearing what he does not want to hear; well, that I've never heard of'.⁸ This appeal to public debate, flattering as it was to academic ideals of rational discussion, was a thin disguise. The most popular pamphlets of the Dutch Golden Age were vitriolic and partisan texts, which did not engage in scholarly discussion but attacked public figures and celebrated their fall. The culture of pamphleteering unleashed by the Dutch Revolt matured during the Twelve Years' Truce into a dangerous, venomous force.

REVEREND DIRT-FLINGERS

On 27 March 1617 Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador in The Hague, wrote home that in the Dutch Republic each side did 'the worst they can do to their opposites . . . they fling dirt in one another's faces, the ministers themselves (of whom most temper and moderation should be expected) publishing in print all the ill they can possibly say of the other'.⁹ Carleton was not an unbiased observer. King James I had weighed in on the theological debate raging in the Dutch Republic in support of the orthodox Calvinist ministers opposing the States of Holland. Carleton himself did not disguise his personal inclination towards the orthodox cause. But he did capture the widespread fascination with the domestic quarrels consuming the Republic, shared by international and Dutch commentators alike. Nowhere in Europe did a theological controversy excite so much public debate.¹⁰

In 1617 the conflict had twisted and turned into a monstrous, unavoidable crisis. By this point the two opposing sides could hardly agree on anything – except for the origins of their dispute. All fingers would point to the appointment of Jacobus Arminius, an Amsterdam minister, as professor of theology at the University of Leiden in 1603. Arminius had a sound pedigree as a patriotic Protestant theologian: his mother and siblings were killed by Spanish troops at the massacre of Oudewater in 1575, after which Arminius enrolled at the newly founded University of Leiden to study theology. He finished his education in Geneva with Theodore Beza, Calvin's successor and the dominant figure in the Reformed community in the latter decades of the sixteenth century. Arminius was appointed as a pastor in Amsterdam in 1587, and became eligible for the position as professor in Leiden sixteen years later when two of its three theology professors died in a bout of plague, leaving only Franciscus Gomarus in place. The appointment of Arminius was not made without opposition. During his time in

Amsterdam, Arminius had developed opinions on some Calvinist doctrines which were considered unorthodox by his Amsterdam colleagues, most notably by the influential minister-cartographer Petrus Plancius.¹¹

Although Gomarus had initially welcomed Arminius's appointment, the theological strains between the two new colleagues could not be long concealed. At first the two professors worked together amicably. They shared a teaching schedule, each presiding over student disputations in turn. Debate emerged between the two professors when it became clear that they disagreed on the subject of predestination, one of the crucial tenets of Calvinist theology. Arminius proposed that eternal salvation was based on an individual's faith, and that divine election could be rejected by human free will. This stood in direct opposition to the orthodox judgement that salvation is determined only by God, and cannot be influenced by human effort. During the early 1600s the Leiden faculty and its students divided between the two sparring professors. The debate also attracted attention from other theologians, including Sibrandus Lubbertus, professor of theology at the second Dutch university in Franeker, and the Leiden minister Festus Hommius.

The debate on predestination soon spiralled into a wider discussion on other contentious theological issues. Arminius and Gomarus also held divergent views on grace, confession, the Heidelberg catechism and the nature of God. These were prickly matters, but all were familiar from previous theological disputes.¹² What exacerbated the conflict was the public nature of the quarrel, and the prominence of Leiden's role in the education of future Dutch ministers. The Dutch Reformed Church was the only church formally supported by the state, but it was a young church in a formerly Catholic society. Its position as the recognised public church meant that most of the Republic's leading citizens gave it their support. But although its services were well attended, no-one could be obliged to undergo the theological examination necessary to become a full member of the Reformed Church: indeed, by 1600 no more than a fifth of Dutch citizens had done so.¹³ One of the crucial functions of the University of Leiden was to provide the state with a corps of competent and persuasive pastors who would inspire the faithful and enforce theological harmony on a heterogeneous population.¹⁴ The disagreement between Gomarus and Arminius was a manifestation of the much wider issue of doctrinal rigour in the Dutch Reformed Church. Moderate 'libertines' argued that the strictness of Calvinist theology made the church unattractive to heterodox believers, or members of other Protestant sects like the Mennonites; whereas the

orthodox faction maintained that doctrinal flexibility would ultimately lead to the decline of the Reformed faith, and, in the worst case, a return to the Spanish yoke.

In 1608 the States of Holland, which held oversight over the University of Leiden, tried to resolve the conflict between Franciscus Gomarus and Jacobus Arminius, but no satisfactory compromise was reached. In 1609 the States once again asked the professors to submit their views for consideration, but by October of that year Arminius was dead. His death did little to stem the conflict. During his tenure as professor Arminius had a significant influence on students and colleagues, who rushed to their mentor's defence after his passing. Ministers like Johannes Arnoldsz Ravens, a student at Leiden in the early 1600s, became staunch defenders of his philosophy in the 1610s, and Ravens was also a major pamphleteer. In 1610 more than forty sympathisers of Arminius, led by Johannes Wtenbogaert, a prominent minister in The Hague and chaplain of the young princes of Orange, submitted a remonstrance to the States of Holland, in which they outlined five theological propositions in disagreement with the Reformed Church. A contra-remonstrance was submitted in The Hague on 10 March 1611, in which six orthodox theologians submitted their refutations of the Arminian creed.

The States hoped that the two sides could work towards consensus. Instead the schism worsened. In the first decade of the seventeenth century the theological debate had played out predominantly within the universities of Leiden and Franeker, where discussion was conducted in Latin, the language of scholars. But as the conflict moved from the university hall to the pulpit of the parish church, it became a vernacular affair. Ministers justified their positions and denounced their opponents to their flock, involving thousands of laymen. And these devout citizens engaged zealously in the debate. Throughout the country, communities divided between Remonstrants, who supported the less rigorous doctrine of Arminius, and Contra-Remonstrants, who followed Gomarus and the orthodox faction. The supporters of Arminius found little support in the northern provinces of Friesland and Groningen, but they thrived especially in Holland, where most large cities ended up with split congregations and a fractured political elite. In Alkmaar serious unrest broke out when Remonstrant ministers were appointed by the magistrates. In some smaller towns and villages, which had only one or two ministers, hundreds of citizens travelled out on Sundays to congregations where the pastor was to their liking. In Amsterdam, Edam, Hoorn and Enkhuizen the orthodox order

prevailed, and the church elders loudly disavowed the appointment of unorthodox colleagues elsewhere.

Although they were vocal, the Remonstrant ministers and their followers were a minority within the Reformed movement in the Dutch Republic. Their opponents knew this well. Throughout the conflict the Contra-Remonstrants clamoured for the convocation of a national synod, where all division within the Reformed Church could be healed. At such a gathering the Remonstrant doctrine was likely to be condemned, and therefore the Remonstrants denied the necessity of a national synod. Instead they appealed to the secular authorities for protection. To support the formal remonstrance submitted by the followers of Arminius, Johannes Wtenbogaert wrote the *Tractaet vant Ampt ende Autoriteyt eener Hooger Christelicker Overheydt* (*Tract Concerning the Duties and Authority of a Higher Christian Government*), in which he defended the authority of the state to regulate church affairs. This was extremely flattering to the States of Holland, many of whose regents sympathised with the moderate tenets of Remonstrant theology.

Wtenbogaert's tract placed the secular authorities in the Remonstrant camp. In doing so the theological dispute developed into a political conflict. The division between Remonstrants and Contra-Remonstrants was now a debate concerning the authority of the state over the church, and it placed the leaders of the secular government in the firing line of orthodox opinion. The authority of the government was compromised further when Conradus Vorstius, the replacement of Arminius as professor at Leiden, turned out to be even more unorthodox than his predecessor. Despite his orthodox reputation, it became clear by 1611 that Vorstius was an advocate of Socinian theology. The Socinians were a Reformed sect, based predominantly in Poland, which rejected the existence of the Trinity. Vorstius was dismissed in 1612, but the States of Holland continued to pay his salary, and the regents openly defended his initial appointment.

In 1613 the States of Holland tasked one of their colleagues, the Pensionary of Rotterdam, to draft a justification of their conduct. This was a young man called Hugo Grotius, the intellectual star of the Republic, and a close friend of Oldenbarnevelt. In his *Ordinum Hollandiae ac Westfrisiae pietas* (*The Piety of the States of Holland and West Friesland*), Grotius advocated a policy of general tolerance for different interpretations of the Reformed faith, upheld by the unassailable sovereignty of the States of Holland. Grotius also took direct aim at Sibrandus Lubbertus, professor at Franeker, deriding him for his interventions in the debate. The *Ordinum*

pietas was the scholarly justification of the regents, followed the next year by a general resolution, also drafted by Grotius, entitled the *Resolutie tot de Vreede der Kerken* (*Resolution for the Peace of the Church*). This ordinance banned all polemical preaching in the province of Holland, and established the unorthodox Remonstrant principles as the foremost religious doctrine of state. The tolerance did not extend, however, to those who questioned the new order. Sibrandus Lubbertus's response to Grotius, composed with the help of other leading orthodox theologians, was banned by the States of Holland. The sentence did little to strengthen Holland's cause, and was, in effect, only a symbolic gesture. Lubbertus's response was printed in Friesland, and it could circulate with relative liberty in Holland, where several cities – including the centre of the Dutch book trade, Amsterdam – had voted against the *Resolutie tot de Vreede der Kerken*.

The increasingly stubborn attitude of the Remonstrant regents and the emboldened defiance of their opponents in the church polarised the debate. The justifications of the Holland authorities prompted their opponents to respond in kind. Sibrandus Lubbertus's letters condemning Vorstius's appointment were translated into Dutch, and other Contra-Remonstrant ministers took up the cause to challenge the authorities in print. Orthodox pastors like Jacob Trigland and Ewout Teellinck published numerous tracts denouncing their Remonstrant colleagues and the regents of the States of Holland. In 1616 Trigland, a young and charismatic Amsterdam minister, argued that the *Resolutie* of Holland was 'nothing less than an attempt to destroy the true teachings and loyal servants of Christ', and that the regents tried to 'turn the hearts of all people, of high and low stature, away from the true scripture, which we profess'.¹⁵ Each attack was met by a printed response from the corps of Remonstrant theologians. The opposing factions were hastening down a spiral of public discord from which it was difficult to escape.

The other remarkable feature of this debate was the extent to which it was conducted in the Dutch language. Notwithstanding Luther's appeals to wider public opinion in the first decade of the Reformation, theologians had never quite lost the sense that theological debates should be conducted, as was teaching, in Latin, the language of scholars. All of the thousands of dissertations defended by students at Dutch universities in the seventeenth century were conducted in Latin, and Arminius and Gomarus adhered to this decorous principle in their first expositions of their contesting theologies. But as the debate intensified, the distinction between scholarly and public debate was completely abandoned. For some, this was still a matter of

regret. In 1616 a Leiden theology student, H. Pagius, lamented that ‘everyone wants to become famous by writing books, especially theological books. Men of all sorts, learned, unschooled, citizens and farmers, they all participate [in the debate], and give work to printers.’¹⁶ For the printers, this was easy money. Producing 1,000 or 1,200 copies of a short pamphlet would take one or two days’ work, the costs were small, and its topicality would ensure a rapid return on the investment. It was easy to understand why debutant controversialists found printers willing to help them join the literary debate.

In his own pamphlets Pagius attacked the Contra-Remonstrant writer Vincent van Drielenburch, a layman from Utrecht who was banned from his home province after insulting its Remonstrant regents. Van Drielenburch moved to Amsterdam, where he became a prolific pamphleteer. Unusual among contributors to the Arminian debate in that he was a layman rather than a trained theologian, Van Drielenburch also cultivated a profile as an orthodox martyr. He exploited his expulsion from Utrecht with pride, placing his name on the title-page of all his pamphlets, subtitled by the distinctive label ‘banished from the city, towns and lands of Utrecht’.¹⁷ While Van Drielenburch was increasingly an embarrassment to the magistrates of Amsterdam, his popularity as a writer captivated the attention of scholars like Pagius, fearful of the influence of uneducated commentators on the outcome of the theological debate.



10 Oldenbarnevelt and his allies were scarcely prepared for the ferocity of the attacks upon them. In a torrent of pamphlets, a surprising number included these subtle and ingenious engraved title-page images.

In reality the majority of pamphleteers who took up a pen in the 1610s were not laymen like Van Drielenburch, but scholars or ministers. Although they liked to give the impression that they were addressing the whole world, most ministers wrote their tracts for their colleagues: to strengthen the resolve of their friends and to condemn or outwit their opponents. They wrote too for the secular authorities, to provide their allies in government with a theological vocabulary to justify their position. Many of the pamphlets produced in the 1610s were lengthy works filled with dense marginal annotations and biblical citations. Jacob Trigland's *Verdediging vande Leere ende Eere der Gereformeerde Kercken* (*Defence of the Teachings and Honour of the Reformed Church*), published in 1616, was more than 300 pages long. This was a hardly a popular bestseller, but it was influential by furnishing other orthodox ministers with material for their sermons. While the printed pamphlets could hardly reach every devout layman, they found a wider audience when ministers echoed the same sentiments from the pulpit. Ministers also helped distribute pamphlets. Reinier Telle's *Tafereel*, a tract which denounced Contra-Remonstrant dogma as a heretical belief, was passed around the town of Tiel in Gelderland by the minister Ellardus de Vries, who received thirty-seven copies from his Leiden colleague Johannes Arnoldsz Ravens.¹⁸

The authorities of the Dutch Republic did not stand by while the debate raged on in print. Rather, they played a significant role in the publication of pamphlets. The Remonstrant States of Utrecht sponsored pamphlets written by the Remonstrant firebrand Jacobus Taurinus, whereas the Contra-Remonstrant magistrates of Amsterdam provided support for Jacob Trigland. The Amsterdammers also ensured that some pamphlets written by Taurinus were prohibited in the city.¹⁹ Taurinus wrote that it was wondrous that his pamphlets had been banned, given that in Amsterdam there was 'such great licence to print and sell all sorts of books, libels and falsities, many more than is allowed elsewhere'.²⁰

By the early 1600s the exodus of book trade professionals to the north had turned the Dutch Republic into the most densely concentrated centre of printers in Europe. Many of these printers found good business in the divisive conflict which dominated the country during the truce. In the 1610s, the ambitious young Amsterdam publisher Johannes Janssonius, later famous for his atlases and editions of the classics, happily produced literature supporting both sides of the conflict. He printed pamphlets by Taurinus, but also placards denouncing Remonstrant libels, pamphlets satirising the Remonstrant cause, news reports of Contra-Remonstrant victories,

and political polemic like the *Practijcke van den Spaenschen Raedt*. Pamphlets made money: that much had been made clear by the Dutch Revolt and by the debates surrounding the truce of 1609. To a publisher like Janssonius, making his first investments in the production of exquisite – and therefore financially risky – books, printing and selling pamphlets would provide an essential financial underpinning for his business.

There was little room for sentiment in commerce. From the earliest days of print, publishers had been accused of following the most financially rewarding cause, rather than producing tasteful or learned work. Such laments often contained a grain of truth: many printers who helped spread Martin Luther's message in the 1510s and 1520s had printed thousands of indulgences for the Catholic Church only a few years earlier.²¹ But many pamphlets which contributed to the conflict of the 1610s were produced by publishers who had an ideological stake in the success of their faction. Pamphlets were financially beneficial, but also inspired by doctrinal allegiance. Many Remonstrant tracts were printed by Jasper Tournay in Gouda and Matthijs Bastiaensz in Rotterdam, two Remonstrant men in towns whose magistrates openly supported the Remonstrant cause. Alongside polemical pamphlets of Remonstrant writers like Wtenbogaert, Caspar Coolhaes, Eduard Poppius and Henricus Slatius, the two men also published numerous editions of other unorthodox theologians, including Dirck Volkertsz Coornhert and Vorstius. On the other side of the debate it was the Amsterdam publisher Marten Jansz Brandt who was responsible for the majority of Contra-Remonstrant pamphlets. Brandt owned a bookshop at the back of the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, a centre of Calvinist orthodoxy. He published nearly all the pamphlets written by Jacob Trigland and Vincent van Drielenburch.²²

Most pamphlets which weighed in on the debate of the 1610s were published anonymously. The printers responsible did not place their name and address on the title-page: pamphleteering was, after all, strictly prohibited. But a missing imprint did not yet make a pamphlet unidentifiable. Most printers used distinct sets of typefaces, woodcut initials and designs which gave away their identity.²³ The truth is that the most devoted publishers, like Jasper Tournay in Gouda or Marten Jansz Brandt in Amsterdam, were protected by the ideological sympathies of their local magistrates, and did not have to make serious efforts to hide their labours. They were at liberty to defend their cause, and as the conflict intensified it would be these printers who would publish some of the most virulent texts.

DON'T MENTION THE WAR

The Twelve Years' Truce had been a contentious issue, and peace was signed against the wishes of a significant segment of the population, including many members of the political and commercial elite. The province of Zeeland, which profited immensely from privateering and the smuggling trade, was wholeheartedly opposed to the truce. So too were those merchant-statesmen who clamoured to set up a West India Company to challenge the Spanish domination of the New World. The riches which the first East India expeditions had brought back from the 1590s onwards encouraged many investors to prepare similar excursions to the Americas; but to their dismay, the truce negotiated by Oldenbarnevelt suspended the foundation of a West India Company. The Protestant Flemish and Walloon émigrés who made up a sizeable portion of Holland's cities also felt disheartened by an end to hostilities. For many, a truce, or a lasting peace, would signal a permanent end to their ambitions to return in triumph to their homes in Flanders or Brabant. If the borders became fixed it would be impossible for them to go back unless they converted to Catholicism or chose to live in permanent hiding in a strictly Catholic society. While the confessional rift in the Dutch Reformed Church between Remonstrant, and Contra-Remonstrants developed, it was political disappointment, if not the sense of betrayal, which was increasingly toxic for those members of Dutch society who felt abandoned by the Twelve Years' Truce.

The cause of those who favoured a renewal of war gradually intertwined itself with the cause of the orthodox Calvinist movement in the Dutch Republic. The orthodox ministers who were dismayed by the acceptance of Remonstrant principles, the southern immigrants and the political elite who had campaigned against the truce, all felt politically marginalised by Oldenbarnevelt and his regime. They were united also by their prominent role as pamphleteers and opinion-makers who sought to advocate their plight in public, rather than resolve their conflicts quietly. These diverse elements of Dutch society were not a distinct faction, let alone a party. But they did share a common vocabulary of anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish beliefs which gained increasing traction during the truce years. This was clear not least from the immense success of Willem Baudartius's *Morghenwecker* (*Warning Call*), published in 1610.²⁴

Baudartius was an exiled Reformed minister from the south, and like many of his compatriots, was appalled by the truce with Spain. His *Morghenwecker*, a 100-page pamphlet published in at least seven editions, presented

a dialogue between a 'Free Netherlander' and a 'Hispanicised Netherlander'. In the pamphlet the two characters discuss the history of the Dutch Revolt, as the 'Free Netherlander' opens the eyes of his partner to the cruelties, crimes and tyrannies inflicted by Spanish forces on the Low Countries. The 'Hispanicised Netherlander' shudders with horror as he learns for the first time of the atrocities committed by Spanish troops and the Duke of Alva's Blood Council. He offers little critical retort, instead encouraging the 'Free Netherlander' to tell him more while he listens patiently.²⁵

There is little ambiguity about Baudartius's intentions in writing the *Morphen-wecker*. The 'Free Netherlander' warns his dialogue partner and the reader that 'we have very little indication that the Spaniard will change his blood-thirsty and vengeful ways'.²⁶ In his preface, addressed to the authorities of the Dutch Republic, Baudartius expressed the anxiety that Dutch citizens would forget the duplicitous strategies of the Spanish crown, and its ambitions for a universal monarchy. Baudartius played to pre-existing fears of Spanish oppression and global domination. This was a popular genre which had been invoked extensively in rebel polemic in the early stages of the Dutch Revolt, and reiterated during the negotiations leading up to the truce.²⁷ Rumours of persecutions of Protestants and Catholic cruelties circulated widely throughout the Dutch Republic from the early 1590s to the middle of the 1620s. Atrocity stories – from the West Indies, Spain, Italy, England, France and the Low Countries – were woven together to compose an overarching narrative of Spanish tyranny, a process which would later come to be known as the 'Black Legend'.²⁸

Foreign news and domestic politics were dangerously intertwined during the 1610s.²⁹ Publicity given to foreign affairs played a significant role in the formation of Contra-Remonstrant narratives. Numerous reprints of foreign edicts and resolutions confronted anxious Dutch readers with state-sanctioned persecution of fellow Protestants. An ordinance published by the burgomasters of Aachen against Reformed preachers in September 1614 was reprinted at least three times in the Dutch Republic.³⁰ The Dutch translation included a poignant subtitle: 'The tyrant Duke of Alva never published a placard as cruel as this.' The title-page also featured a woodcut of the coat of arms of Charles V to identify the edict with Habsburg tyranny. Besides Baudartius's *Morphen-wecker*, one of the most popular pamphlets published in the Dutch Republic in 1610 was a reprinted ordinance issued by Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella in the Habsburg Netherlands on 31 December 1609, appearing in at least six reprinted editions.³¹ This ordinance prohibited scandals to the detriment of the Catholic religion,

and was aimed at curbing the influence of northern Protestants travelling to the Habsburg Netherlands during the 'Twelve Years' Truce. It ordered northern Protestants to keep quiet, forbade any southern inhabitants from engaging in religious debates, attempting conversions and singing any psalms not permitted by the Catholic Church, and told them to be vigilant regarding illicit preaching and disputations. The ordinance vindicated the opponents of the truce, who perceived the regulation as nothing but an attempt to subdue the Dutch Republic and its Reformed religion by other means.

Those who favoured a renewal of war with Spain increasingly had public opinion on their side. A proxy war erupted as early as 1610, in the wake of a succession crisis across the Dutch border, in the Duchy of Jülich, Berg and Cleves. The German princes who contested possession of the region divided along confessional lines, and the Dutch and Spanish felt obliged to defend their strategic interests. Expeditionary forces were despatched to the duchy, but the conflict was not resolved until 1614, after a series of sieges and skirmishes which left the Dutch seriously exposed, and the Spanish in control of the German town of Wesel. The whole affair was covered in minute detail by news writers like Nicolaas van Geelkercken and Broer Jansz, who followed the Dutch army as it marched on campaign, in effect serving as some of the first war correspondents. Van Geelkercken produced detailed illustrated broadsheets covering the two sieges of Jülich, accompanied by reports of their progress. In one 1610 map he commented to the reader that the map was 'drawn after life, in which the reader will find great entertainment. And you will not repent the money you'll spend, because you can see the army without danger of being shot.'³²

Van Geelkercken's extensive coverage of the Jülich crisis played directly into the hands of those who wished to see a quick end to the truce. At the same time, it also glorified the role of Prince Maurice, the martial hero of the Dutch Revolt, at the expense of the pacifistic regents. In 1613 Van Geelkercken produced a magnificent engraved broadsheet lauding the deeds of Maurice, including depictions of every victory or exploit of the Stadhouder.³³ In 1615 Van Geelkercken produced another engraved broadsheet, an allegorical print on the war in Jülich, accompanied by a textual account of the conflict.³⁴ Central to the print is a demonic illustration of the Pope, complete with a paper flap: readers could lift the skirt of the Pope to reveal depictions of murders and executions committed against Protestants.

Van Geelkercken fed, with delicate skill, anxieties about an international Catholic conspiracy. He also exposed the extent to which Dutch Protestantism had been marginalised within a grand European conflict. Some of those

who published these acid commentaries saw this relative passivity as part of a devious plot orchestrated by Oldenbarnevelt and his allies. How could the Dutch look on while the Catholic world was on the offensive? The only answer to that question was the existence of an enemy within. By 1617 the Dutch Republic was awash with apocalyptic warnings of Spanish fifth columns operating to return the provinces to Habsburg dominion.³⁵ A series of popular pamphlets published in 1617 and 1618 published evidence of the new strategy adopted by the Spanish monarchy to gain control of the Low Countries. It had become clear that the Dutch Republic could not be conquered by arms, so it was to be done by a truce, and thereafter by bribes, betrayal and deceit: 'The most courageous and brave people, who have not been able to be conquered by force, have often been beaten, after they have been brought to peace or a temporary halt of arms.'³⁶

The circulation of anti-Catholic and anti-Habsburg news in the 1610s was coordinated by a select group of dedicated polemicists. These were publishers and printers who made much of their profit through the sale of news and cheap print, but occupied prominent positions in the book trade. They had strong connections with Protestant news writers and agents abroad, and a strong interest in the success of the Contra-Remonstrant cause in the Dutch Republic. Entrepreneurs like Aert Meuris in The Hague were part of a network that exerted considerable pressure on Dutch public opinion towards the end of the Twelve Years' Truce.³⁷ Meuris was one of the most prolific polemicists for the Contra-Remonstrant cause, and had close connections to Constantijn Huygens, who worked for the English ambassador Sir Dudley Carleton and later the Dutch diplomat François van Aerssen, both stern opponents of Oldenbarnevelt. Meuris produced a variety of anonymous tracts which publicly associated the allies of Oldenbarnevelt and the Remonstrants with Spanish tyranny and the persecution of Protestants throughout Europe. Other orthodox agitators, like Jan Claesz van Dorp in Leiden, Jacob Jacobsz in Amsterdam and Jan Andriesz Cloeting in Delft, printed very similar material, often reprinting each other's publications.³⁸

The Remonstrant regents were never able to find the same traction in the reporting of overseas news. While the news from abroad looked bleaker and bleaker, the States of Holland continued to focus on the importance of theological moderation and issues of provincial sovereignty. As the Contra-Remonstrants increasingly adopted a position which identified them with the sufferings of Protestants abroad, the Remonstrants were exposed as indifferent at best, or colluding with the Catholic world at worst. It is uncertain whether Oldenbarnevelt's regime would have pressed for a continuation of

the truce when it expired in 1621. In any case his enemies were determined never to give him the chance.

THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY

One of the greatest embarrassments to the Remonstrant regents in the States of Holland was the entrenched hostility of the townsfolk of The Hague, their seat of government. In 1616 hundreds of citizens, including some of the most prominent judges of the Court of Holland, marched out to nearby Rijswijk for worship every Sunday. There they attended the sermons of Henricus Rosaeus, a Contra-Remonstrant minister who thundered against the heresy of the Remonstrants holed up only three miles away. This was an uncomfortable stand-off which would not last. The regents in The Hague refused the minister a pulpit in the town, but they were dealt an unexpected blow when Prince Maurice allowed Rosaeus to hold his service in the Kloosterkerk, a former Dominican cloister in The Hague which had been serving as a cannon foundry. On 23 July 1617 Maurice himself attended the service of Rosaeus, abandoning the service of the Remonstrant Wtenbogaert, the court chaplain.

The Kloosterkerk was, uncomfortably, next door to Oldenbarnevelt's house. The Pensionary could not ignore Maurice's provocation, and within two weeks Oldenbarnevelt and his allies in the States of Holland passed the *Scherpe Resolutie* (*Stern Resolution*). This ordinance, passed with a bare majority vote in the States, allowed Holland's magistrates to recruit mercenary troops for their defence, ostensibly for protection against foreign invasion. There was little doubt, however, that the troops would be used against Contra-Remonstrant citizens in towns with Remonstrant city councils. The resolution also ordered all regular troops stationed in Holland to follow the instructions of the States, rather than the Captain-General, Prince Maurice. The province of Utrecht followed Holland's lead. By the autumn of 1617 the Dutch Republic was on the brink of civil war.

A third of Holland's towns demanded the convocation of a national synod and the dismissal of the mercenaries. This faction, led by Amsterdam, the wealthiest, and Dordrecht, the first town of Holland and therefore a political heavyweight, published its joint remonstrance to the States of Holland in print.³⁹ Divisions within towns where Remonstrant magistrates held sway were also brought to the fore: there was unrest in Haarlem, Den Briel, Oudewater and Schoonhoven. In the autumn of 1617 Leiden's Remonstrant magistrates, fearful of the wrath of their own citizens, installed



11 Closing the Breestraat, one of the major thoroughfares of Leiden, was a serious political misstep by a panicked city council. On the left we see the town hall steps from which proclamations would be made.

a palisade on two sides of the central Breestraat, protecting the entrance to the city hall. The barricade was manned by mercenary troops recruited under the jurisdiction of the *Scherpe Resolutie*, a gross insult to the honour of Leiden's civic militia. The palisade showed that the magistrates had lost all authority in their own city, and that they were no longer willing to uphold the values of their citizen body. In the aftermath of the conflict the palisade would become the subject of intense mockery.⁴⁰

The proponents of orthodoxy all looked to Maurice. Prophetic visions of Spanish tyranny and Oldenbarnevelt's deceit went hand in hand with a popular appreciation of Prince Maurice, the Captain-General who had done so much to secure Dutch borders before the Twelve Years' Truce; and who marched heroically to Jülich to defend Protestant interests. The Stadhouder's hand, however, would not be forced, and he approached the political crisis cautiously. His brilliance as military commander rested on his patience: to Maurice every siege was a mathematical problem, one which was to be solved with careful planning, precision and a cool head.⁴¹ He had only fought one open battle against Habsburg forces, at the dunes of Nieuwpoort in 1600, and nearly lost the day. Maurice did not rush into conflict with Oldenbarnevelt and his supporters, but ensured that they were isolated slowly. The Stadhouder knew he had the provinces of Zeeland, Friesland

and Groningen on his side: they had all appealed for a national synod, and openly disputed Holland's unorthodox course. In January 1618 Maurice turned the States of Gelderland to his side by installing a new magistracy in Nijmegen, one of its chief towns. In May Maurice bullied another eastern province, Overijssel, into his fold with the threat of occupation. By the summer of 1618 only two provinces, Holland and Utrecht, were opposed to Maurice, and Holland was bitterly divided.

On 31 July Maurice arrived in Utrecht, and ordered the mercenary troops employed by the States to be disbanded. The magistrates felt forced to comply, avoiding a direct confrontation with the prince but effectively sealing the fate of Oldenbarnevelt and the Remonstrants. Maurice moved on to Holland, touring its cities one by one. The mercenary troops were disbanded, and Maurice invoked his authority as Stadhouder to elect new magistrates wherever he visited, deposing Remonstrant regents and appointing new allies. Printers sympathetic to the prince produced broadsheets and pamphlets which listed the names of the toppled magistrates and their replacements. News of one intervention only intensified demand for more. Oldenbarnevelt had lost all friends and followers in government, and on 29 August he was arrested in The Hague on the orders of the States General.

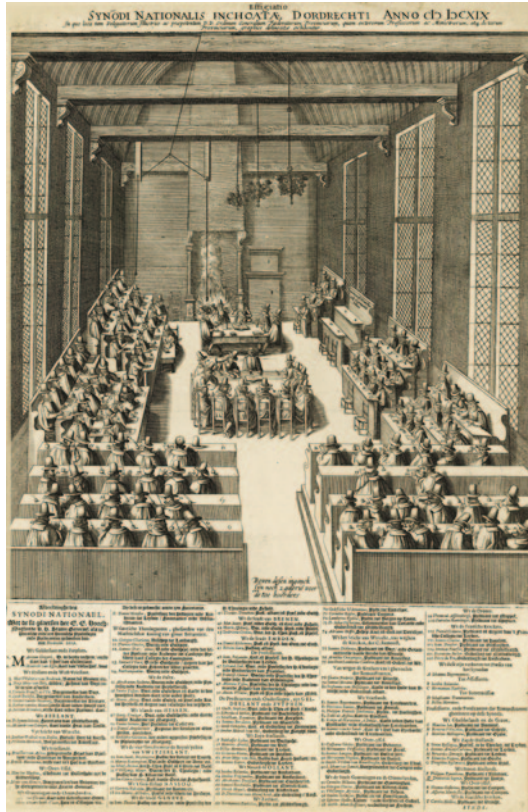
The summer of 1618 was a cathartic time. Years of toxic division and debate were at an end. But before the country could heal, the losers had to be destroyed. The publishers of the Dutch Republic were all too happy to take their allotted role in this process. Illustrated broadsheets and pamphlets satirised the fall of the Remonstrants.⁴² One of the most popular images was that of the *Arminiaensche Dreck-Waghen* (*Arminian Dung-cart*), in which Johannes Wtenbogaert drove a wagon towards Rome filled with prominent Remonstrants and other unorthodox figureheads.⁴³ Numerous pamphlets reiterated accusations made against Oldenbarnevelt and his allies. The *Verclaringhe van den gouden blaes-balck* (*Explanation of the Golden Bellows*) featured a title-page engraving in which two wicked Spaniards operate a bellows to spray Oldenbarnevelt and his allies with coin.⁴⁴ Other pamphlets defamed the fallen statesman by besmirching his ancestry and family: the popular *Gulden Legende van den Nieuwen St Jan* crowed that:

This is the reputable nobility of master Jan van Barnevelt, Knight &c. His father a murderer; his wife [born] from incest; his brothers, the one filthier than a swine and falser than a dog; the other a miser, a drunkard and an enemy of the true Religion; his sisters notorious whores; and his sons debauched felons.⁴⁵

While pamphleteers and printmakers celebrated the fall of Oldenbarnevelt, the Pensionary was kept under arrest at the Binnenhof in The Hague, awaiting trial. To prepare for his defence he requested a copy of the *Practijcke van den Spaenschen Raedt*, but this was denied, as were all other requests by Oldenbarnevelt or his family to allow him to consult his papers.⁴⁶ A national judiciary commission was set up to investigate the Pensionary's political dealings. The commission was stacked with Oldenbarnevelt's personal enemies, and after lengthy interrogations the judges convicted the Pensionary of treason, the perturbation of the true Reformed religion and the encouragement of division, dissent and unrest in the state. On 12 May 1619 Oldenbarnevelt was informed of the sentence, and he was beheaded the next morning, in front of a crowd of hundreds of citizens, kept at bay by a formation of soldiers.

In this sad denouement to the crisis print also played its part. Claes Jansz Visscher's engraving of the scene of execution provided citizens with a solemn portrayal of the occasion, and an eyewitness perspective was offered by the newsman Broer Jansz in a special issue of his newspaper.⁴⁷ The text which circulated most widely was the sentence condemning Oldenbarnevelt. The sentence itself was vague and the charges largely unsubstantiated, but the details of the judgement still found an eager audience.

The day after the execution of the Pensionary the States General granted three booksellers in The Hague the exclusive privilege to sell the copies of the sentence of Oldenbarnevelt, and the sentences of the other scapegoats of the conflict, which included, most notably, the great Hugo Grotius.⁴⁸ The regents ruled that Hillebrant van Wouw, the printer of the States of Holland and the States General, would receive the rights to the Dutch edition. Van Wouw, as official printer of Holland, had printed numerous tracts in support of the Remonstrant regents during the 1610s, but its opponents clearly held no personal vendetta against the publisher. The licensed printer of the authorities did not get involved in the struggles of his paymasters. At the same time Aert Meuris received the rights to the Latin edition of the sentences, and Louis II Elzevier the privilege for the French edition. Van Wouw undoubtedly took the richest share: the French and Latin editions were issued predominantly for an international audience. By the end of the month Meuris and Elzevier delivered a complaint to the States, demanding that they receive a more prominent share of the spoils, but this remonstrance was rejected outright by the regents. Meuris, like Van Wouw, also tried to obtain the privilege for the publication of the acts of the Synod of Dordt, which had opened in November 1618 and concluded a few days before



12 The Synod of Dordt. The Remonstrants seated round the centre table, surrounded by their implacable opponents, are clearly in the dock.

Oldenbarnevelt's execution. The lucky booksellers of Dordrecht, however, would be blessed with this monopoly. A consortium of five Dordrecht booksellers issued numerous editions of the acts, publishing new versions even in 1621.

As expected, the Synod of Dordt had condemned the Remonstrant doctrine as a false interpretation of the Reformed faith. In the aftermath of the synod most Remonstrants lay low, while the most prominent figures retreated abroad. The States General issued regulations against the public profession of Remonstrant principles and Remonstrant gatherings. Remonstrant ministers were dismissed from their positions and ordered to sign the orthodox articles of faith established by the synod. If they refused they faced lifelong imprisonment.⁴⁹ Informants reporting on Remonstrant activities could expect 500 gulden in reward for their assistance.

Hiding underground and in exile, the Remonstrant ministers reinvented their cause as a struggle under the cross. Congregations were dispersed, but bonds between the faithful were maintained by the distribution of Remonstrant devotional pamphlets. These could no longer be safely produced within the borders of the Republic. Pieter Arentsz, a Remonstrant bookseller who started his career in Haarlem, fled to the East Frisian port of Norden, and was joined there by the Remonstrant minister Dirck Rafaelsz Camphuysen. The local count, Enno III, was sympathetic to their plight and granted Arentsz a position as his official printer. With the editorial assistance of Camphuysen, Arentsz was responsible for at least two dozen Remonstrant texts in the early 1620s, invoking the humility, patience, suffering and ultimate redemption of the persecuted brethren. Another important Remonstrant press was set up in Antwerp, managed by the minister Henricus Slatius. Many important Remonstrant leaders had fled to the Southern Netherlands, confirming the worst suspicions of the orthodox Calvinists, who viewed their opponents as a Catholic fifth column.

The authorities soon complained about the distribution of 'seditious, calumniating and mendacious books' which spread from Antwerp and Norden into the country.⁵⁰ The few printers who continued to publish Remonstrant texts in the Dutch Republic became more careful and attempted to disguise as much as possible any hint betraying the origin of their work.⁵¹ Publishers who were caught, like the Remonstrant Claes Cornelisz Spont, were often identified by evidence provided by another member of the book trade who had also been arrested, rather than by their typography. The interrogation of the Amsterdam printer Joris Veseler in 1621 set the Amsterdam authorities on the trail of an extensive network of ministers, printers, booksellers and other sympathisers who helped distribute Remonstrant texts.⁵² Veseler admitted he printed numerous polemical and devotional works, including 1,200 copies of a history of the final days of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the text of which was given to him by Spont, a bookseller in Alkmaar. Once he was brought in for questioning, Spont provided the names of numerous recipients of Remonstrant poetry, songs, sermons, elegies and political pamphlets which had been distributed in coordination with Henricus Slatius and Pieter Arentsz: Roeloff Jansz in Alkmaar received 15 pamphlets, Jan Gerritz in Rotterdam bought 675 pamphlets, and Cornelis Lockertsz in Amsterdam purchased several thousand. Although the recipients included some booksellers, some were ordinary parishioners like the embroiderer Claes Joosten, or ministers, like the Schoonhoven preacher willing to act as a supplier of subversive literature for the spiritual comfort of his congregation.

The authorities had caught Spont and Veseler, but their statements made plain that there was little that could be done to halt the spread of Remonstrant literature. The interrogations revealed that most pamphlets sold to distributors cost less than 1 stuiver apiece, a tiny investment for a Remonstrant sympathiser looking for spiritual relief from the darkness of the times. The deliveries disclosed by Spont included numerous copies of engraved portraits of the martyrs of the Remonstrant cause: of Oldenbarnevelt, Grotius and the exiled Wtenbogaert. In 1621 Grotius would make a dramatic escape in a book chest from his imprisonment in Castle Loevestein, an embarrassment to the authorities which would only strengthen the personal cult of Oldenbarnevelt's former ally.

Grotius's fantastical escape would become a mainstay of Dutch folklore, but in the Golden Age it was the pamphlet literature of the Remonstrant crisis which resonated most clearly in Dutch society. The pamphlets of the 1610s survive today in astonishing numbers, unlike many other types of short publications. The reason for this was that very soon after their appearance they were bound together in volumes, big enough to fit naturally among more substantial tomes in a library. Such collections crop up continually in auction catalogues of libraries throughout the century: already in 1628 Abraham and Bonaventura Elzevier advertised in one catalogue the sale of various 'bundles of polemical pamphlets concerning the church' from the 1610s.⁵³

The Remonstrant controversy would cast its shadow over the Dutch Republic for the remainder of the seventeenth century, and its consequences would continue to define the religion, literature, theatre and politics of the Dutch state. As its effects reverberated in future decades, the pamphlets of the conflict were frequently consulted and invoked as tools of history. Today this is how most pamphlets have come down to us, as cherished historical sources, but also as a sombre warning of the effects of the division and hatred of the conflict. But perhaps the most important lesson of the Twelve Years' Truce was the power of pamphleteering. To the booksellers of the Dutch Golden Age, pamphlets, prints and libellous publications were a welcome source of income; potentially risky, but not risky enough to let the financial opportunity pass by. To Dutch statesmen, ministers and writers, pamphlets were persuasive tools, allowing for the continuation of politics and religion by other means. To the Dutch public, they were tokens of identity in victory and defeat, and valuable emblems of recollection, laughter and tragedy.

CHAPTER THREE



News Cycles

WHEN JOHAN VAN OLDENBARNEVELT was led to his death on 13 May 1619, among those present in the hushed crowd in the Binnenhof was the Amsterdam publisher Broer Jansz. Broer Jansz was an experienced newsman. He began his journalistic career reporting from the campaign headquarters of Maurice of Nassau, and in later years he would continue to style himself ‘former *courantier* of the army of his Princely Excellency’: one of the world’s first embedded war correspondents. So he was hardly a partisan of Oldenbarnevelt and probably shed no tears for the aged statesman’s fate – he knew, however, that the audacious power grab by Maurice’s supporters was the most critical news event in the history of the new Republic. So Broer Jansz hurried down from Amsterdam to take his place in the silent crowd watching the aged statesman’s dignified end. What followed next was truly extraordinary. For Broer Jansz returned to Amsterdam, to publish not a pamphlet, as he would have done ten years previously, but a special issue of his weekly newspaper. This was a single sheet, in much the same style of his newspaper issues, and within a day or so Broer Jansz had it ready; indeed, demand was so high that he had to print two editions.¹ The text ended with the tantalising inducement that ‘what follows next I will communicate to you this coming Friday in my newspaper’.²

This was a new development. It was only in 1605 that the first attempt had been made in Germany to sell the concept of printed serial news – what became the newspaper. Most of the newspapers came out once a week, and most of them struggled; it was hard to gather enough subscribers to cover the costs of news gathering, production and distribution. Many early newspapers were short-lived ventures; not so in Amsterdam, where by 1618 both Broer Jansz and Caspar van Hilten had established newspapers that would last for more than half a century. Others soon followed these pioneering ventures. Within another twenty-five years Amsterdam had six competing papers: the avid news reader could buy fresh news on five days of the week.



13 The special issue of his weekly paper in which Broer Jansz recorded his eye-witness report of one of the seminal events in the history of the new Dutch state.

It was perhaps no surprise that the Dutch took to the newspaper with such enthusiasm, for this was a society that ran on information. Holland was a conurbation, and during the first half of the seventeenth century it would be progressively linked by a network of canals offering swift-running passenger transport: a form of internal communication infrastructure unique in Europe.³ The busy sea lanes decanted into Amsterdam and Rotterdam news from all around the world. Competing levels of government generated plentiful news of their own, though not always of the sort that could be safely printed in the newspapers. Much of this news continued to circulate by traditional means: word of mouth, correspondence and anonymous pamphlets. The newspaper was just one additional feature in a fully functioning news network.

So the story of Broer Jansz's opportunistic appearance at Oldenbarnevelt's execution tells us much about the new fashionable medium of the newspaper, both its popularity and its limitations. The weekly cycle of publishing (in Amsterdam on a Friday, later on a Saturday) could not easily accommodate breaking news and big stories. Broer Jansz had to publish his special issue to avoid being scooped by other publishers issuing pamphlet accounts. The chronic limitation of space in the single-sheet newspapers and the formulaic structure made it difficult to make room for a big story. And the fact that Broer Jansz had heard what was afoot – and could get down to The Hague in time to witness Oldenbarnevelt's execution – was an indication that traditional methods of news distribution, correspondence, word of mouth and occasional print, actually worked very effectively. This would prove a testing environment for the new news medium: and one in which the newspaper was not necessarily destined to succeed.

THE BIRTH OF THE NEWSPAPER

The first surviving newspapers date from 1609, published in the German city of Strasbourg by an experienced newsman named Johann Carolus. Carolus had for some years been the proprietor of a manuscript news service, providing handwritten news bulletins to subscribing customers. This was a form of news service that had originated in Italy in the fifteenth century, and gradually spread to northern Europe. Those with money, for this was not cheap, would be furnished with a range of reports from all of Europe's major news hubs, carefully chosen by the news agent and copied out by hand by his team of scribes. These *avvisi*, generally composed once a week, were regarded as the gold standard for news, and those with good sources could charge a substantial sum for a subscription.⁴ Carolus now decided to provide a print version of this news digest, potentially making it available to a far wider clientele. To encourage subscribers to archive their copies Carolus also provided a collective title-page, with which copies could be bound together at the end of the year: this is how the volume from 1609 still survives today, in a single set, now at Heidelberg University Library.

For a long time this was thought to be the first European newspaper, but thanks to a recent discovery in the Strasbourg city archives we now know that in 1609 Carolus had already been publishing his newspaper for four years. In December 1605 Carolus appeared before the town council with a proposal.⁵ He had, he told them, been publishing a print version of his

newsletter for some weeks: he now asked the council to guarantee him the exclusive right to publish such a printed news service in Strasbourg. Carolus's appeal seems to have met with a sympathetic response, since no rival venture was ever attempted, and this pattern of local monopoly was replicated as newspapers were established in other German cities. That was until 1618, when the newspaper reached Amsterdam, and the history of the new invention took a decisive twist. By December 1618, Amsterdam already had two weekly papers: that run by Broer Jansz, whom we have already met in the crowd witnessing the death of Oldenbarnevelt, and the *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* (*Current news from Italy, Germany, etc.*) of his near contemporary Caspar van Hilten, an enterprise quickly passed on to his son, Jan van Hilten.



14 One of the earliest Amsterdam newspapers, the news does not yet extend to the reverse side. This format was extremely economical in its use of paper, but far more difficult to store than the pamphlet style.

This in itself was remarkable, for the economics of newspaper production were challenging. The manuscript newsletters were a bespoke service for a narrow range of wealthy clients who were prepared to pay a substantial sum for regular updates of news from around the continent. The print versions, the first newspapers, followed this model in terms of both form and contents. Like the *avvisi* they offered a series of clipped paragraphs, each datelined from a different European city, and generally they also imitated the pamphlet structure of the handwritten predecessor: the first newspapers were generally pamphlets of eight pages. The problem for the first newspapermen was that they could not imitate the manuscript newsletters in terms of price. The price of printed news was governed by the normal economics of book production, and that meant that subscribers could be charged for each issue no more than the cost of a pamphlet of similar length, which would be 1 or 2 stuivers. This was a fraction of the customary subscription for the bespoke manuscript service. It was by no means certain that there existed a regular market for news sufficiently large to compensate publishers for this drastic reduction of income compared to a premium manuscript service. And so it proved. In the first few years, the growth of the newspaper market was driven by the same factors that sustained any innovation in the print world, technological fascination and the desire not to be left out. But when the novelty wore off, it was hard to make a profit on the low margins of an eight-page pamphlet, particularly when the news-gathering process itself entailed considerable cost. Many of the first newspapers closed after only a few years, or even just a few issues.

That the Amsterdam newspapers survived so well was partly due to a typically pragmatic Dutch design innovation. Instead of the pamphlet form favoured by the German papers, the Amsterdam newspapers used a single half-sheet printed on both sides. This was far more economical in terms of paper. The familiar sequence of reports from Rome and Venice, Vienna and Frankfurt, Madrid and Copenhagen were squeezed into four tightly packed columns with little waste. In fact, the Dutch papers achieved the considerable feat of covering as much news as the German pamphlets at a fraction of the production cost. By the time the German pamphlets had used one page for the title-page, with the reverse and final page usually blank, this left only five pages for news. The Dutch model made the cost of a subscription affordable for a far wider range of potential readers and Amsterdam, of course, offered precisely such a market. But the Dutch model had its drawbacks. The single sheets were far more difficult to preserve than a bundle of pamphlets bound together at the end of a year, and far more prone

to immediate disposal. In consequence, the rate of survival of the early Dutch newspapers is shockingly low, and would be lower still but for the discovery of substantial holdings in archives abroad: in London, Moscow, Stockholm and Paris. If Dutch citizens were not so keen to hang onto their copies, then foreign diplomats were: in the tense state of European politics during these decades, it was important to know what news was being offered to the people of the Dutch Republic, fast emerging as continental Europe's most significant Protestant power.

Broer Jansz and Caspar van Hilten had clearly chosen a felicitous moment to begin their weekly newspapers. In the first years their issues were dominated by news of the evolving crisis of the Thirty Years' War, as first in Bohemia and then through Germany the challenge to Habsburg hegemony flamed and was brutally extinguished. Although the Dutch newspapers couched their reports in the sober neutral tone familiar from the confidential manuscript newsletters, the choice of contents had a clear political message. It reminded the Dutch public that the diplomatic manoeuvres, the marching of armies, the sieges and battles, victories and defeats reported week by week from the German war zones played an essential part in the crisis of security that seemed to have somewhat retreated in the years of the Twelve Years' Truce when Oldenbarnevelt held sway. In this way the Amsterdam newspapers, even though they avoided the fiery rhetoric and editorialising of the pamphlet literature, still aligned themselves firmly with the policy priorities of the Orange faction – a reminder, if one were needed, that there was no such thing as neutral news.

Assured of official approval, and of an eager anxious readership, for the next thirty years Broer Jansz and the Van Hiltens dominated the newspaper market in the Dutch Republic. Both found a national audience for their papers. The Amsterdam papers were sold not only in the other Holland towns, but further afield in Nijmegen and the eastern provinces, and north to Leeuwarden and Groningen. Competition between the two enterprises was far from cut-throat. After some experimentation both settled on Saturday as their day of publication, secure in the knowledge that many customers would read both papers. For a while the two papers offered a considerable degree of overlap in their reporting, but later the two publishers cultivated slightly different news networks. As the Dutch statesman-poet Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, an avid newspaper reader, wrote to his brother-in-law, one could always find something in the one that was not in the other.⁶

The power and reach of the Amsterdam papers made it more difficult than would have been expected to launch papers in other Dutch cities. The

Hague, home of the law courts and the seat of government, had no paper before 1652, and other major centres of printing and commerce waited even longer. The paper sponsored by the local council in Arnhem served a limited market in Gelderland; a small venture in Delft was essentially a reprinted digest of what had appeared in the Amsterdam papers a few days before.⁷ Competition, when it eventually emerged, was mostly in Amsterdam itself. By the mid-1640s, Amsterdam had six papers, publishing a total of ten issues a week, for by this point the thirst for news had justified the publication of mid-week issues, first on Tuesday and eventually Thursday, Monday and Friday as well.

THE ROAD NOT TAKEN

The Amsterdam papers succeeded because, as so often in the history of Dutch commerce, they took an existing model and introduced a radical cost-effective variant. But there was a third approach, which Dutch newspapers eschewed, and that was the rumbustious, partisan, opinionated pamphlet news serial pioneered by Abraham Verhoeven in the Catholic Southern Netherlands. Verhoeven was one of the great figures of the early news industry: not the inventor of the newspaper, as is still defiantly maintained on the plaque on the site of his shop in Antwerp, but still a radical innovator of talent and imagination. In the process he pioneered changes in the presentation of news that anticipated many of the features of our modern news world. But while Broer Jansz and the Van Hiltens made a comfortable fortune, Verhoeven would die a pauper, the spectacular early success of his *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* (*New Tidings*) a distant bitter memory. This was the road not taken for the early Dutch newspaper.

Verhoeven, like Broer Jansz, had cut his teeth on news pamphlets, reporting from the other side of the conflict the successes of Habsburg arms. As an experienced woodcut artist, he was also in a position to produce illustrated broadsheets of the skirmishes of the first decade of the seventeenth century, before the Twelve Years' Truce (1609) put an end to the fighting on land. By 1620, with the truce due to expire, Verhoeven approached the Habsburg authorities with an interesting proposal. He would publish a news serial devoted entirely to the triumphs of Habsburg arms and those of their Catholic allies.⁸

Permission was granted, and Verhoeven set to with relish. Some weeks he would produce three or four pamphlets a week, each emblazoned with a headline proclaiming the main news of the week, accompanied by a

title-page woodcut of some furious engagement. Soon the dated sequence was also numbered, something that to this point had eluded the Amsterdam papers.⁹ And Verhoeven refused to be bound by the etiquette of the handwritten newsletters, duly adopted by the early newspaper, of a sober sequence of datelined paragraphs. Sometimes his issues would be given over to a single report, or a letter from the field by a triumphant Catholic general. Sometimes there would be poems lauding Catholic victories, or mocking the bedraggled and divided Protestant armies. The partisanship was clear and unashamed.

The Amsterdam newsmen were aware of what was going on in Antwerp, not least because Verhoeven would sometimes taunt them with their failure to report, as he saw it, the full extent of Catholic victories. For the most part Broer Jansz and the Van Hiltens refused to be drawn. Though in no way disguising their devotion to the patriotic cause, the Amsterdam newsmen eschewed the rhetorical exuberance and rampant editorialising that characterised the



15 The irrepressible Abraham Verhoeven. Title-page illustrations of this type were repeatedly reused through his series, and increasingly with little evident connection to the content.

Antwerp paper, or indeed the pamphlet literature of the same years. This restraint was very significant for the future history of the Dutch newspaper, for future titles would follow Broer Jansz and the Van Hiltens in their radical differentiation between the proper reporting style of newspapers, and the more discursive moralising appropriate to pamphlets.

This radical divide, between the newspapers offering a digest of sober (and sometimes indigestible) fact, and the political pamphlets as instruments of polemic and advocacy, would be maintained through the two centuries of the Dutch Republic. Even in 1785 we find a paper in Leiden lecturing its readers that factional politics was not the proper business of the newspaper.¹⁰ This carved out a clear space for the newspapers in the media firmament, but also limited their capacity to act as instruments of persuasion. As a result, pamphlets never lost their vital role in the news market. Despite the success of the newspapers, the pamphlet still had many advantages. It was not bound by either a fixed timetable of publication or limitations of space. It was easier to take risks in a one-off pamphlet than in a newspaper. A printer might be prevailed upon to print off a pamphlet, often anonymously, with the reasonable assurance that their involvement would escape detection. But a newspaper publisher had to print their name and address on each issue – if only to make clear where subscriptions should be brought. They had to be conscious that a single misstep – overstepping the invisible line of what the authorities would permit – could lead to fines, or a temporary suspension of publication: and even a short interruption could be disastrous for the maintenance of their subscription network. It is no surprise that in these circumstances most newspapers remained extremely cautious in their presentation of news, particularly domestic news. Details of the deliberations of the States General, the provincial States or city councils were generally regarded as off limits. Editors addressed their readers only to denounce rivals, never to offer opinions on domestic politics. The newspaper, then, had a particular and limited profile: austere and factual, and often, in its miscellany of reports from faraway places, rather impenetrable.

Where Verhoeven was concerned, the men of Amsterdam would definitely have the last word. For a few years Verhoeven commanded the terrain, the chronicler of a rampant Catholic assault that threatened to upend the delicate confessional balance in Europe. But then Catholic victories dried up, and his patrons in Brussels and Antwerp lost patience. The *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* was closed, and Verhoeven, already in financial difficulties, could think of no better plan than to attempt a pale imitation of the sober

Amsterdam papers.¹¹ This new venture lasted no more than a couple of years; the family interest was sold to a son, who gave his ruined father refuge working in the shop as a day labourer.

A SCHOOLMASTER DROPS BY

Who then were the readers of this new, serial printed news? As we can see, the newspaper had not extinguished the news pamphlet. Great events would always provoke a flurry of titles, celebrating, analysing, drawing morals, denouncing factional enemies. These would sell well, as would the more expensive woodcuts and engravings of sieges and battles. In 1639 Jan van Hilten sent each week twelve copies of his *Courante uyt Italien* to the Leeuwarden bookseller Tjerck Claessen for his local subscribers. But when news came through of the great Dutch victory of the Battle of the Downs he sent fifty copies of his special issue with details of the triumph. To this, in the weeks that followed, he would add to his regular consignments copies of a hilarious engraving of a Spanish gentleman being forced to regurgitate his defeated fleet, along with engravings of the hero of the hour, Admiral Maarten Harpertsz Tromp.¹²

People would always dip in and out of the news. The Nijmegen bookseller Abraham Leyniers, who received twenty-four copies of the *Courante uyt Italien* at the start of the year to sell to local customers, would order more than thirty at the height of summer, when campaigning was under way.¹³ But why, with a nimble, flexible print world always ready to satisfy the curiosity for great events, would people invest in a weekly diet of rather indigestible reports, presented in a rigid sequence with little explanation or commentary? Here, by way of example, is a sequence of reports from the early Amsterdam newspapers, in this case Broer Jansz's *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren* (*Tidings from Various Quarters*) of 11 June 1633.

From Rome, 19 May 1633.

A few days ago, when the foundations of the castle of St Angelo were being fortified, a copper case was found there filled with coins minted in the era of Alaric and other Gothic kings, the ancestors of the Swedes. Various literati are trying to find an explanation concerning this discovery.

The Duke of Mercoeur and the Prince of Martignes arrived this morning from Naples, and were well received. They have now taken their leave from the Pope, and are due to return to France.

From Venice, 18 May.

The Duke of Parma made a serious complaint to the governor of Milan regarding the violence of Spanish soldiers, who have plundered and burnt many villages belonging to Parma on the frontiers of Milan. But the Spanish governor ignores these complaints. It is also certain that almost all nobles in Milan have tried to convince the governor that he should be responsible for the maintenance of the troops, and that the nobles are willing to provide a portion of their income for that purpose. The nobles have tried to publicise their proposal, but the governor wishes to hear none of it.

From Danzig, 18 ditto.

The Poles in service of the Emperor in Silesia have all started to return back home, and most of them are wounded and in a disappointed state, except for those who met the Spanish ambassador and his servants on the road, whom they robbed down to his undershirt, and exchanged clothes. These Poles are now strutting around, dressed in Spanish wear.

From Augsburg, 17 ditto.

The armies of Field Marshal [Gustav] Horn and Duke Bernhard of Weimar have arrived at Donauwörth, and it seems that they will try to besiege Rain. The Bavarian army, consisting of 200 companies and some dragoons, has reached the bridge at Regensburg; whether they will now dare to turn and face the Swedes, time will tell.¹⁴

In 300 words we meet six foreign rulers or generals, and a range of unfamiliar places. Who would want to know all this and why – particularly when the only guidance on the significance of the information offered is the resigned assurance that ‘time will tell’? To get a sense of how the newspapers functioned in the Dutch Republic’s complex ecology of information, this is a good place to introduce one of the Dutch Republic’s most famous news-readers, the schoolmaster David Beck. Beck was an unassuming man, and certainly sought no celebrity; and he would have found none, but for his decision in 1624 to keep a diary. This seems to have been suggested to Beck to assuage the grief of bereavement after the death of his wife. Beck turned out to be a natural diary keeper, acute and curious. His journal provides a chronicle of a full but gentle life, and one in which keeping up with the news played an important part.¹⁵

David Beck had arrived in the Netherlands from Germany in 1617. He quickly married a local girl and established a private school, offering a vernacular education and particularly the cultivation of a beautiful writing hand. The school flourished and Beck earned a good income. But he also had considerable responsibilities. He and his wife had three children in short order; it was giving birth to the third of these that led to the death of his wife. Beck would leave The Hague in 1625 to start a new school in Arnhem; he remarried, and had three further children. In Arnhem he also briefly resumed his diary.¹⁶

Beck's 1624 diary offers an exhaustive account of his social activities during a year when his school flourished but the international perspective darkened. This was an exceptionally turbulent year for the Republic, so it is no surprise that Beck regularly recorded his impressions of the news and how he obtained it. Newspapers played a regular, but not exclusive part in his information network. Beck frequently discussed political affairs with his well-connected uncle Adriaan van der Cruijse, and it was one such encounter that brought the news of the Dutch capture of San Salvador de Bahia in Brazil. Uncle Adriaan brought news of the progress of the siege of Breda, though it was a neighbour's maidservant who told him that Prince Maurice had returned from Breda gravely sick.¹⁷ Beck also had his own sources, not least Gouda's two representatives to the States General, who lodged at an inn run by his mother-in-law when in The Hague. With all this news swirling around him, Beck did not feel the need to take out a subscription to the newspaper, though he read those passed on to him by uncle Adriaan eagerly enough. Sometimes he would take a copy of the newspaper with him when out on a walk, to while away half an hour on a park bench. Other times he would read the paper out loud to the family circle in the kitchen at home. Just occasionally, he would buy a copy when he found himself in Amsterdam, and could call by the shop of Jan van Hilten around the corner from the stock exchange for this purpose.

Beck was a well-informed and curious citizen, and we get from his diary a clear idea of the part a newspaper would play in keeping him abreast of the world's affairs. The best, most immediate and most vital news came to him through his circle of friends. Beck lived a very busy social life: for 1624 he recorded 1,179 encounters with 137 different people. He also wrote or received 150 letters.¹⁸ Incoming letters were often passed around to be read communally; the letters his uncle received from his friend, the postmaster of Nuremberg, offered a further important source of news from the war front. So this was a very rich and varied news environment, and Beck was in

no way dependent on the newspapers, or indeed on other forms of print, for up-to-date news. But if Beck's social connections offered him the richest source of news, they also help explain why he valued the newspapers. On the one hand, social encounters provided plentiful opportunities for hearing the news. On the other, they also raised the importance of being, or appearing to be, well informed. The newspaper provided background and corroboration and helped Beck make sense of the geopolitical context of what his friends had told him. If someone told you that Count Tilly had effected a rendezvous with the Bavarians at Ingolstadt, it helped to know where that was, and what it might import. The newspaper provided a weekly briefing of what an informed and judicious editor had determined it was important for you to know. It provided a foundation around which to build the knowledge of current affairs provided by conversation and correspondence. Beck moved in circles where knowledge of current affairs was commonplace. Since he had no Latin education, and had not attended university, he may have felt a particular need to appear well informed. The newspapers provided a lifeline, and a means of social security, when one never knew quite who one might meet when strolling about The Hague. In one case, when walking with a local magistrate, this was Jacob Cats and Constantijn Huygens, two of the Republic's most formidable statesmen intellectuals.¹⁹

Beck clearly valued his newspaper and, but for the generosity of his uncle, and the teeming houseful of children draining his pocket, he might well have invested in a regular subscription. He stood on the cusp of those who would have been expected to do so as a matter of course: merchants with interests of international trade; magistrates and officials; and book-sellers. Merchants were always having to think ahead; the sort of deep background offered in the newspapers was helpful in planning future investment decisions. Members of the regent class had the best sources of confidential news, but it was still useful for them to know how events were being reported to the wider public, even if they did not learn anything they did not know. Of course, such men were also the best equipped of all citizens to read between the lines of the sometimes abstruse reports of diplomatic comings and goings.

The third critical market for newspapers was the book trade itself. Some booksellers, as we have seen, took a regular stock of newspapers to supply their own network of subscribers, and it would have been surprising if they did not keep one or two in the shop for casual sales, or to allow browsing customers time to read the latest reports. If these occasional readers learned

nothing else, then they would soon have deduced that to be an informed reader it was necessary to supply themselves with an atlas, or at least a map of the latest war zone, of the sort that booksellers stocked in increasing numbers. The frugal David Beck bought ten books in 1624, though not an atlas; rather he took advantage of the regular trip to pay his quarterly rent to consult his landlord's copy of Mercator.²⁰

Thus booksellers established their own informal reading rooms; it would only have required a table and a pot of coffee to pre-empt one of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment's most famous centres of sociability and news exchange, the coffee shop. The competition for such business was clearly intense, and in 1674 the booksellers of Groningen came together to ensure that it would be a little less cut-throat. The thirteen bookshops in the city that would henceforth stock newspapers agreed to charge the same price: 3 gulden 15 stuivers for an annual subscription to one newspaper a week, and more pro rata for up to four titles. Yet for exactly half these prices customers could pay to read the same number of newspapers in the shop: a drop by and read subscription cost just under 2 gulden a year per title.²¹ Bear in mind that Groningen was a city that still had no locally published newspaper of its own: yet customers could be assured of access to at least four titles each week. This is just the sort of service that might have appealed to a man like David Beck; and it shows how far the trade had come in identifying and serving its clientele in fifty short years.

THE INVENTION OF ADVERTISING

By the second half of the seventeenth century newspapers were published in print runs of anywhere between 700 and 2,000 copies per issue. Publishers seem to have been content with this level of circulation; this was, in any case, about the limit of what could be printed on a single press, back and front, in a single day. Any more copies would have required simultaneous printing on two presses, with the additional attendant costs of wages for the compositor and press men. If only a couple of hundred extra were needed then the danger of printing on one press extending over more than one day would have rendered the news less current, and cut into the production schedule for the rest of the week.

So a subscription list of around one thousand might be considered optimum and efficient, until a publisher could reckon on doubling this, and work with two presses. But it was still a relatively small number from which to fund the print shop and the necessary range of contributing

correspondents. In the first years of the newspapers, publishers could mostly make do with redacting much of their news from commercial manuscript newsletters. But this proved inadequate to satisfy a demanding and discerning public; newspapermen increasingly felt obliged to employ their own agents to gather and despatch regular digests of news. As reader expectations grew, so did the number of datelined reports in the papers. The two early Amsterdam papers generally contained between ten and twelve datelined reports per issue; by the 1670s eighteen or twenty had become the norm, and this included a larger number of reports from outside the major news hubs, and nearer the seat of the action.²²

Building and maintaining such a network was increasingly costly, potentially ruinously so. A second or third issue in the week could spread the cost of maintaining the correspondence networks, but increased the expenditure on paper and wages, and not all readers would take additional mid-week issues. Newspapers urgently needed a second source of income beyond the weekly sales. In Germany this often took the form of direct subsidy by the local power; in England a Whig or Tory patron might supply a generous subvention in return for loyal editorial support. In the Netherlands this second income stream was generated by the book world itself, through the introduction of paid advertising.

As we have seen, the Dutch did not invent the newspaper – their genius lay, as in so many aspects of industry, in the refinement of the mechanisms of production and sale so as to maximise efficiency and profits. In the newspapers this is evident in their adoption of a single double-sided sheet which could be crammed with far more text than the German pamphlet prototypes. Equally imaginative was their adoption of paid advertising. Here the Dutch were true innovators – the first advertisements appear in Dutch papers within years of their establishment, and by mid-century most issues carried two or three, always located at the end of the text on the reverse side. It would be another fifty years before advertisements became a common feature of papers in England, and later still in Germany and elsewhere.

In the first years, the advertisements in Dutch newspapers were generally orientated towards the requirements of the book industry.²³ It was the ingenious Abraham Verhoeven who pointed the way, with a notice in the *Nieuwe Tijdinghen* of January 1620 advertising the contents of the next issue. Later in the month he published the first book advertisement, again for one of his own publications. The following year Broer Jansz's *Tijdingen uyt verscheyde Quartieren* contained the first advertisement in the northern papers, for a pamphlet discussing contemporary events in Switzerland, and

a news map of the Palatinate, one of the chief theatres in the German wars; at this point, the subjects of the books advertised were very close to the newspapers' own news agenda.

It did not take long, however, for publishers in Amsterdam and elsewhere to recognise the value of advertising their new and forthcoming books in the weekly newspapers. Within a few years one in every two newspapers carried at least one advertisement, and often for more than one title. Most advertisements were placed by Amsterdam publishers, but not exclusively. Within a decade Broer Jansz and Jan van Hilten had carried notices of forthcoming publications for publishers and booksellers in sixteen towns in Holland, as well as Utrecht, Arnhem, Middelburg, Zwolle, Leeuwarden and Deventer. There could be no better demonstration of the national reach of the two Amsterdam papers, for these regional publishers would hardly have borne the expense of placing an advertisement had they not been familiar with the papers, and confident of their widespread readership.

Until the middle of the century, notices for forthcoming book titles made up the overwhelming proportion of all advertisements placed in the Amsterdam newspapers. Quite apart from their importance in shoring up the finances of the newspaper trade, these advertisements also provide precious information on the state of the domestic book market. The books advertised aimed at a particular segment of the market: the bourgeois home. Publishers seldom took out space to advertise short pamphlets, nor did they give notice of the publication of large Latin works, whose customer base was widely spread and in large measure international. These slow sellers did not need newspaper advertisements to find their customers. Rather publishers concentrated their advertising budget on the solid domestic market of vernacular bestsellers. Almost all the advertisements were for books in Dutch, and with a heavy concentration on the religious book trade. Bibles, psalm books and catechisms figure largely, as do books of religious instruction and popular devotional texts. There were also a fair sprinkling of self-help manuals and mathematical primers.

This information is priceless, for these are precisely the sort of books likely to be intensively used by their new owners, and then replaced by a new copy or new edition. In consequence they are very poorly represented in library collections today. They seldom feature in the more Latinate collections sold at auction. So through these newspaper advertisements we can often recover the titles of books that would otherwise be lost altogether: we will see many examples of this in the ensuing pages of this book. Members of the book trade also used the newspapers to give notice of forthcoming book

auctions, where and when they were to be held, and where copies of the catalogue could be obtained. Once again, these newspaper notices often provide the sole proof that such an auction ever took place. Thanks to the Amsterdam newspapers' precocious and at this point unique adoption of paid advertising, we can unlock otherwise lost chapters of the contemporary book world.

MORALISING NEWS

From the middle of the century the Dutch newspaper industry underwent a major restructuring. Major cities such as The Hague, Leiden and Rotterdam finally got their own newspaper. A newspaper presence was also established in Utrecht and some smaller places such as Weesp. The most significant change occurred in Amsterdam and Haarlem. In order to exercise greater control over the news trade, the Amsterdam magistrates intervened to rationalise the local industry. The several competing titles combined into a single tri-weekly venture, after an awkward period when different publishers were given responsibility for alternating issues of a single title. The need for such drastic action was made clear by the emergence of a new and powerful force on the Dutch newspaper scene, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* (*Authentic Haarlem Newspaper*) of Abraham Casteleyn. Casteleyn was already an experienced newsman when he published the first issue of his paper on 8 January 1656. Until this point, Casteleyn had worked as a newsletter writer for Jan van Hilten in Amsterdam. When Van Hilten died, Casteleyn decided to strike out on his own. He advertised this venture by distributing copies of his first issue to booksellers throughout the Republic, accompanied by a short printed manifesto. The first issue contained sixteen reports from nine countries; the second surviving issue carried some twenty-one reports, along with two advertisements and one public announcement.²⁴

This level of investment suggests this was already a well-capitalised venture. Abraham's father Vincent was a prominent printer and bookseller in Haarlem, who had held the lucrative and responsible post of city printer for sixteen years until his death. Abraham could call on an established network of far-flung correspondents, and he brought to his newspaper both shrewd business sense and imagination. By moving from the black letter type of the Amsterdam newspapers to a small roman typeface Casteleyn could cram more news into the double-sided sheet. In compensation, and to assist legibility, he began to group reports under national headings: Italy, France, England, and so on.

Within a decade the tri-weekly *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* was the leading newspaper in the Republic. But the existence of newspapers in five major population centres inevitably changed the market. The national marketplace in which Broer Jansz and Jan van Hilten had operated unchallenged was a thing of the past. A publisher or bookseller could no longer assume that an advertisement posted in one paper would reach readers throughout the country. The proportion of newspaper advertisements devoted to promoting new book titles began, in consequence, to recede. This was at first largely a relative matter, since the number of advertisements continued to increase exponentially, and a large number were still for new books. But other commercial traders had also now discovered the potential of newspapers to peddle their wares. This had begun already in the 1640s, when schoolmasters began to take space in the newspapers to advertise a new school or a change of location. Sometimes they would also mention that readers could call upon them for textbooks they had written themselves, and of which they kept a stock.²⁵ In 1643 came the first advertisements placed by brokers, offering employment opportunities for young men in Amsterdam.²⁶ Soon surgeons, apothecaries, inventors, inn-keepers and merchants joined the ranks of advertisers. By the 1660s announcements of auctions – of art, books, exotica and commercial goods – had become a standard feature too. With every passing year, newspapers advertised an ever-widening range of goods, as well as chronicling the everyday tragedies of city life: lost cargo, missing children, dishonest or absconding servants.

Newspapers increasingly struggled to meet the demand for advertising space. But with each advertisement contributing approximately one and a half gulden to their profits, they hardly wanted to turn business away.²⁷ In the eighteenth century, newspapers would take to printing advertisements sideways up the margins of the text, a design disaster but a pragmatic necessity to wring every opportunity of profit from a vibrant world of commercial exchange. Although this hardly increased the legibility of the text, there is no doubt that the proliferation of advertising greatly increased the attractiveness of newspapers to an ever-widening circle of potential readers. In an age when to expand coverage of domestic politics was to risk instant revocation of their licence to publish, advertisements in the newspapers offered their readers virtually their only glimpse of everyday life in the Republic. The Dutch newspapers had found their true vocation.

If we leave aside the advertisements for new books, the remaining advertisements and public announcements divide equally between those placed by public bodies and those by private citizens. Most were concerned in some



16 This beautiful image captures brilliantly the extent to which print and traditional manuscript forms of communication had become inextricably intertwined in the Dutch worlds of commerce and information. The printed items include an issue of the *Oprechte Haarlemse Courant*, the *London Gazette*, a Bruges paper and an almanac.

respect with the pursuit of trade. Public bodies used the newspapers to advertise a new barge or ferry service, a new school, the dates of markets, and new municipal projects. Private individuals took space in the papers to advertise inventions, the sale of a business, mislaid goods and lost servants. One did not have to be a potential purchaser of these goods and services to find many of these notices fascinating: a glimpse of lives of elegant ease or, indeed, heart-breaking calamity. In 1657 Casteleyn's Haarlem paper carried an announcement of the theft of a large quantity of diamonds and jewellery, including a bracelet with thirty-five small diamonds and a little portrait of the Princess Royal (Mary Stuart, the mother of William III). The reward for information leading to their recovery was the equivalent to a year's salary

for a prosperous independent trader or the pastor of one of the city churches. Readers might well have wondered what lay behind this, or how it came to be that a bond worth 12,000 gulden, with which you could buy three houses on the fashionable side of Amsterdam, could have gone missing.²⁸ But the papers were not all glitter and opulence: the advertisements parade their fair share of villains, dupes and family tragedies.

The Dutch lived well, but in a society of credit and debt, fortunes could be lost in an instant, and the newspaper advertisements contain many sad, cautionary tales of the fickleness of fortune or the mysterious workings of God's providence. Who could read their weekly paper without feeling for the predicament of Abigael van den Hove, still hoping to locate her lost husband, eighteen years after he fled the family home?²⁹ Reading these sometimes heart-wrenching family stories and the salutary tales of fortunes lost to the storms at sea or carelessness at home makes it clear that the voyeuristic literature of *Schadenfreude* is in other respects poorly represented in the print culture of the Dutch Republic. Compared to other societies of the time, we have relatively few execution pamphlets, or tales of notorious crime. The lavishly illustrated broadsheets that decorated the walls of many Dutch homes were mostly representations of sieges and battles, or maps and views of the new Dutch possessions abroad. There is no equivalent in the Dutch Republic to the sort of broadsheets that filled the albums of the sixteenth-century Zurich minister Johann Jacob Wick, with their celestial apparitions, monstrous crimes and miraculous rescues of starving families.³⁰ Instead, we have the newspapers, with their runaway servants, escaped criminals, mislaid children and the unidentified corpse of a young man who had fallen off the canal barge, presumably drunk, and drowned.³¹

These were stories likely to resonate with precisely the social groups who made up the body of newspaper readers: professional men and merchants, pastors and schoolmasters, and the more successful artisan tradesmen. These were men who presided over extended households, and were happy to be reminded that apprentices could abscond, that servants were easily tempted by the possessions they dusted and cleaned as they went about their household chores, and that the accumulation of wealth brought with it danger and the need for vigilance. Householders like these were acutely aware that the good fortune they enjoyed rested on very fragile foundations. If they had to be reminded of the need for eternal vigilance in the defence of God's bountiful gifts then the tales of misfortune and criminal activity they read in the papers were a constant aide-memoire.

THE ECOLOGY OF NEWS

By the end of the century, the newspapers, through experimentation, adaptation and an acute awareness of the interests of their fellow citizens, had found their audience. And they had also found their place in the ecology of news. This was not necessarily to provide the most urgent, up-to-date news of domestic crisis or looming threat – the virtual ban on domestic reporting had seen to that. The magistrates of the Dutch cities, for all their famous tolerance, were no keener than other of Europe's ruling elites to allow a running commentary on their deliberations. When newsmen got into trouble and faced the authorities' wrath, it was normally because they had overstepped the mark in this respect, or become too flagrant in the bribing of clerks and minor officials for titbits of news.³² Those who toed the line enjoyed handsome profits. By the end of the seventeenth century, one in every three printed works on sale in the Republic would have been an issue of a newspaper. By the first decades of the eighteenth century the municipal authorities could charge a substantial fee, as much as 2,500 gulden a year, for the local monopoly on publishing a newspaper in one of the major Holland towns. The publishers paid because they now made a handsome profit. But it gave them a further incentive not to speak truth unto power. That was left to the pamphleteers, who had less to lose.

Dutch magistrates kept the newspapers on a tight rein, not because they wanted to keep their citizens in the dark, but because they had their own means to communicate with the wider population, to explain official policy and to appeal for their support and understanding. But it did mean that newspapers could offer little when the Dutch Republic fell into one of its periodical bouts of intense political crisis. Subscribers reading their newspaper in 1671 and early 1672 would get no idea of the depth of the calamity about to unfold in the *Rampjaar* (Disaster Year). But the citizens of Vlissingen, in the province of Zeeland, would have had an ominous warning of the mounting peril in the publication of the official ordinance instructing them all to obtain a firearm.³³ And Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt would certainly have had a sense of his increasingly tenuous hold on power from the furious deluge of pamphlets that accompanied the deterioration of the international scene.³⁴

So it is hard to escape the impression that for the news that mattered, citizens looked to other sources than the newspapers. Much of the news they contained, the battles and sieges, princely weddings and riots in faraway cities, had no likely impact on the lives of their readers. Conversely much of the news that citizens had to know, such as changes in tax rates, the

decisions of the States of Holland or the municipality, did not appear in the newspapers at all. What then are newspapers? Part recreation, part contemporary history, part an essential manual of instruction for those who would be well equipped for the conversation of polite society; but certainly insufficient in themselves as a news service for those involved at almost any level in public affairs, whether members of the Amsterdam city council or a long-suffering Vlissingen brewer searching for a firearm.

It may seem perverse to conclude with the reflection that newspapers played a subsidiary role in purveying real news in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. But one should see this rather as an indication that the existing mechanisms and conduits for news functioned very efficiently, in cities like Groningen with no newspaper, as well as the great newspaper hubs in Holland. Newspapers were not irrelevant to news culture – by providing a miscellany of news from around the continent they helped build a wider circle of informed citizens than in any part of Europe. And with the advertisements, newspapers began to embrace a wider cultural role, and began the transition to the all-round purveyors of stimulation and entertainment that they would progressively become from the eighteenth century onwards.

CHAPTER FOUR



To the Ends of the Earth

IN AUGUST 1597 AMSTERDAM had reason to celebrate, for three Dutch ships had just returned from the East Indies. The fleet had departed two years previously with the mission to subvert Portuguese dominance of the spice trade and establish a trading colony on the island of Java. Contrary to expectations, the expedition had not been profitable: the meagre cargo of pepper brought into Amsterdam could barely cover the costs of the fleet's equipment. The fleet had also suffered enormous casualties: of the 248 sailors who set off from Amsterdam two years earlier only a third were still alive.

Yet the successful completion of the voyage still fired the imaginations of hundreds of statesmen, merchants and citizens. The return of the fleet had demonstrated that the battle with Spain could be fought on a new front; and that the Iberian monopoly of the spice trade could be broken. In 1598 twenty-two ships set sail for the East Indies from the Dutch Republic. These expeditions were a far greater financial success, and many stakeholders received a 400 per cent return on their investments. The ensuing expedition fever prompted the creation of multiple commercial companies in the major ports of the Republic. The States General soon realised that the existence of rival companies would hinder Dutch expansion overseas and forced all ventures to merge. The year 1602 saw the foundation of the Dutch East India Company (*Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, or VOC), granted a twenty-one-year monopoly on trade in the East Indies. Its headquarters (*chambers*) were located in six important maritime centres in Holland and Zeeland: Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Delft, Middelburg, Hoorn and Enkhuizen. In a pioneering development, the VOC was financed by a fixed capital stock, raised by issuing public shares in the summer of 1602. Any individual with at least 25 gulden to venture could become a shareholder: in Amsterdam, then home to 60,000 inhabitants, over 1,000 citizens became investors. The VOC, the first publicly traded company in the world, was launched with a total capital of 6,440,200 gulden.¹ It would come to play a crucial role in the formation of the Dutch Golden Age.

In the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic became a global empire. But despite the numerous investors in the VOC, only a tiny fraction of Dutch inhabitants would ever personally experience life in the hot, sweaty, mysterious places from which traders extracted spices and other precious cargo. In the late summer months the return of the East Indian fleet was eagerly awaited; from the middle years of the century the number and cargo of the returning vessels was carefully enumerated in the Amsterdam newspapers. But even for those with no financial interest in the return of the ships, the fleet brought excitement: the homecoming of family members and friends, exotic gifts from returning sailors, and tales of unimagined people and beasts, stories that were probably increasingly far-fetched and decreasingly lucid as an eager audience plied these unreliable witnesses with festive drink.

Dutch publishers were never slow to sense a business opportunity. The arrivals of the first fleets were immortalised in descriptive pamphlets and



17 This brilliant map by Blaeu demonstrates the extent to which geographical knowledge was shaped by Dutch commercial priorities and cartographical prowess. The representation of Australia and Japan remains sketchy, and the commercial companies took many centuries to comprehend the massive size of the Indian peninsula.

engraved news sheets. The triumphant commanders needed little prompting to offer their own accounts to a waiting public. Soon no self-respecting ship's captain would depart without a significant supply of notebooks to record their own adventures and discoveries. If they struck a chord, such narratives could be almost as lucrative as the ship's cargo. This became clear immediately after the arrival of the first successful expedition of 1597. Three months after the return of the fleet, the Middelburg publisher Barent Langenes printed an account of the voyage drawn from the journal of an anonymous crew member.² Here readers could learn of the strange peoples and animals which inhabited Madagascar and the East Indies; they would be shocked by the attacks on the Dutch fleet, mutinies and terrible disease, hunger and thirst. The journal was an instant success, and French and Latin translations prepared by Langenes followed the next year; the account was also reprinted in London and Paris. The success of the journal prompted Cornelis Claesz in Amsterdam to issue a competing journal of the same voyage, kept by the merchant Willem Lodewycksz, which appeared in three editions in 1598.

Dutch success overseas owed much to the popularisation of printed travel journals. Within a few years of the first East India voyages the Dutch Republic had become the centre of navigational, cartographical and travel publishing in the world. At a time when Dutch publishers were gradually beginning to dominate the international trade in books, the numerous Latin, French and German editions of travel accounts brought readers across Europe new visions of the strange worlds beyond the sea.³ The success of this new genre created new opportunities for Dutch publishers, and some would make them the foundations of a considerable business.

HALL OF FAME

The publication of travel journals also had a serious purpose. Seamen needed to know the latest routes and their dangers; merchant investors were always on the look-out for new opportunities; and Dutch statesmen were alerted to new ways to strike at their enemies, the Spanish Habsburgs and their reluctant allies, the Portuguese. Most importantly, this literature stretched the cultural imagination of the Dutch Republic. This was a small country of fishermen and artisans, hitherto a people with few ambitions beyond the North and Baltic seas. Only from 1570 did the Dutch have a permanent commercial presence in the Mediterranean; never mind the crossing of oceans and circumnavigation. The Portuguese and Spanish had

already divided the world in the early sixteenth century; Iberian, Italian, English and French ships had made distant voyages long before the Dutch. Now Dutch explorers were heralded as the great champions of discovery, raised on a pedestal equal to Ferdinand Magellan and Sir Francis Drake. While many nations looked to historic tales of knights, saints and emperors for reflections of their own importance, the Dutch had their swashbuckling, god-fearing captains, most of whom were once boys from humble backgrounds growing up in the ports of Holland and Zeeland. The sea could make anyone a hero.

The continents lying beyond the ocean were enigmatic, closed worlds: the Portuguese had always gone to great lengths to keep their discoveries secret. Portuguese navigators were obliged to hand in their journals and maps upon their return. Whatever information leaked out had to be treated with caution; there were plenty of extraordinary tales which turned out to be entirely fabricated. Yet sometimes even what was true seemed wholly fantastical. Take Joris van Spilbergen's description of his first encounter with a llama:

In the last journey we made on land, we brought on board a sheep of most wondrous proportions, with an extremely long neck, a hare lip, and very long legs. With these sheep they [the indigenous people] cultivate their land. They also use the sheep to carry great loads, altogether in enormous quantities, because there are often three or four hundred, or even a thousand sheep, laden with wine, coconuts, maize, silver and other wares, whatever one can think of.⁴

It was hard to resist the image of a thousand strange sheep burdened with treasure, since increasingly such dreams were becoming a reality, as more and more East Indiamen returned home, laden with spices, porcelain, silk and exotic flora and fauna. With every new voyage, every new description, the world abroad was enlarged to even greater possibilities.

The book world played a significant role in disseminating the Portuguese trade secrets which allowed the Dutch to sail unopposed into the East Indies. In 1592 an exceptionally well-travelled Dutch trader, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, returned home to Enkhuizen after spending fifteen years abroad. Van Linschoten had worked as a merchant in Seville and Lisbon, and in 1583 had shipped for Goa, the great Portuguese entrepôt on the southwest coast of India, as the secretary of the newly appointed archbishop. Van Linschoten spent nearly six years in Goa, where he became intricately

familiar with Portuguese administration, navigation and commerce. Some of the nautical maps which passed before his eyes, and which he was able to copy, were closely guarded secrets.⁵

Upon his return to the Dutch Republic Van Linschoten drew the attention of Cornelis Claesz. The publisher knew that Van Linschoten's information on the East Indies route was worth as much as the spices in the cargo. In 1594 Claesz made an agreement with Van Linschoten to publish the accounts of his travels for the Portuguese. Claesz ensured that Van Linschoten's account was supplemented by information from Dirck 'China' Gerritsz, another Enkhuizen trader who had visited the East; and he received generous assistance from the Enkhuizen doctor Bernardus Paludanus, whose erudition, intellectual connections and famous cabinet of curiosities made him one of the most knowledgeable scholars of the New World.⁶

In all, the efforts of Claesz and his collaborators led to the publication of three texts in 1595–1596. Together they revolutionised the publication of travel literature. The largest text was Van Linschoten's *Itinerario*, which described his voyage to Goa and contained detailed accounts of the geography, inhabitants, trade and customs of India, all richly illustrated with large engravings. Van Linschoten's second publication, the *Reys-gheschrift vande Navigatien* (*Navigational Travel Journal*), was a practical navigational guide. The third volume provided a description of the coasts of Africa and Brazil and their inhabitants. Together the three texts covered several hundred pages in a large folio format. These were not books for everyday pockets: they were richly bound and the illustrations of many copies were coloured in opulent tints. But Van Linschoten's trilogy proved immensely popular (and was reprinted several times by Claesz within a decade) because the books demonstrated for the first time that the Dutch could challenge the Portuguese in the East Indies. As part of the *Reys-gheschrift*, Van Linschoten published a short overview on the income the Spanish crown drew from its dominions. His steely patriotism and shrewdly judged trilogy made him a celebrated figure.

In 1594, while Claesz was preparing Van Linschoten's material for publication, the explorer himself was already at sea again. An expedition had been launched to sail to the East Indies, not via the Cape of Africa, but through the undiscovered north-eastern passage. It was widely believed that a voyage through the icy waters of the Arctic would be quicker than the Portuguese route; and it would not necessitate risky military confrontations on the journey out and back.

The first voyage bound north-east was obliged to turn back after encountering ice floes. A second fleet, filled with merchant wares, was despatched

in 1595, but failed to make any more progress. The States General promised a reward of 25,000 gulden for the first successful north-eastern passage to the Indies, but Van Linschoten now abandoned the quest. Two ships, financed by the magistrates of Amsterdam, set sail in 1596 for a third attempt: one was piloted by Willem Barentsz, an experienced skipper who had also sailed on the first two north-eastern expeditions. Nearing Nova Zembla, on the Arctic coast of Russia, the two ships parted company. In August 1596 Barentsz's vessel became trapped in pack ice. As the ship was gradually crushed by the ice, the crew resolved to build a lodge on land, the *Behouden Huys*, to last through the winter, where, indeed, they remained until the following June. Most of the men survived, living off strict rations supplemented by polar bear and Arctic fox meat. In the summer the crew embarked on two open sloops back to the Netherlands, though Willem Barentsz and several others died on the voyage home.

When the twelve survivors returned to Amsterdam in October 1597, the first successful East Indies expedition had already arrived. No more attempts would be made to sail the north-eastern route. But the Amsterdam publisher Cornelis Claesz recognised in the harrowing expedition a dramatic story waiting for an audience. One of the surviving crew members, Gerrit de Veer, was the son of the notary and historian Ellert de Veer, whose work had previously been published by Claesz. Now the publisher approached the younger De Veer for his account of the expedition.

In the spring of 1598 Claesz published the *Waerachtighe Beschryvinghe van Drie Seylagien, ter Werelt Noyt Soo Vreemt Ghehoort* (*True Description of Three Sea Voyages, the Most Remarkable Ever Heard*). The account contained brief descriptions of the first two voyages, followed by a much longer account of the third voyage and the crew's long winter in their sanctuary house. This, as Claesz wrote, was a story with 'fierce, devouring bears and other sea monsters and unbearable cold' in a land never visited before by man.⁷ The journal published by Claesz paid effective tribute to the suffering of the crew in a combination of fast-paced prose and thirty large illustrations. The reader could follow the tormenting advance of the ice as it engulfed and crushed the ship; the construction of the lodge; the interior design of the building; and numerous violent encounters with polar bears, which on several occasions led to the death of Dutch sailors. Thanks to his prominent position in the Dutch book trade, Cornelis Claesz ensured that he maintained control of the publication of the journal. He produced French and Latin translations, and would publish De Veer's journal nine times before his death in 1609. Despite the absence of further

Dutch exploration in the Arctic, De Veer's journal remained very popular. In his 1611 history of Amsterdam the historian Johannes Isaacius Pontanus devoted twenty pages to the voyage of Barentsz, lifting entire passages and illustrations from De Veer's travel journal.⁸ This proud testament to the talents and bravery of the Amsterdammers also played its part in elevating the epic survival story into the canon of Dutch history as 'the voyage of Willem Barentsz'.

As Cornelis Claesz counted his profits, there was one man who was aghast at the success of De Veer's journal: his former collaborator, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten. The celebrated navigator now found he was not the only explorer with a bestselling journal. In 1601 Van Linschoten financed the publication of a fourth travel journal, describing the first two north-eastern voyages on which he had sailed in far greater detail than De Veer, and criticising the new hero for his lacklustre observations.⁹ Van Linschoten's scholarly account flopped, and was not reprinted once. The pioneering explorer had failed to realise that it was the sensational suffering of the third voyage which made De Veer's journal a bestseller. Van Linschoten had cultivated a new genre of writing, but it had quickly evolved beyond his grasp. The resentful explorer, his fame on the wane, died in 1611.

The travel journal was a genre of literature that appealed to virtually every social class of literate society, and possibly even beyond; for in the plentiful illustrations there was much to catch the eye even of those who could not read. Journals of exotic voyages and expeditions were collected even in the most sober, scholarly circles. The learned professor Joseph Justus Scaliger's fine collection of books and manuscripts was almost all in Latin and other scholarly languages, as one might expect.¹⁰ The solitary exception was a group of around fifteen Dutch travel narratives. Throughout the seventeenth century we find them in large quantities in the collections of professors, lawyers, statesmen and even ministers. The controversialist Amsterdam minister Balthasar Bekker possessed a large quantity, but his orthodox opponents also praised their quality.¹¹ The Rotterdam minister Franciscus Ridderus acknowledged that, while he was a theologian, he hugely enjoyed reading journals and voyages: he was able to borrow more than sixty from the library of his colleague Jacobus Borstius.¹²

The fact that many journals were reasonably short allowed them to be collected in bundles. This is often how we find them listed in auction catalogues of libraries: four, five or even sixteen travel journals, bound together in a single volume.¹³ Since they cost only 3 to 10 stuivers apiece, it was relatively easy to put together a significant collection. The engraver Cornelis le

Blon owned more than 170 voyages, undoubtedly to provide inspiration for exotic scenes.¹⁴

This was a large, varied but intensely competitive market, in which speed was of the essence. When Captain Olivier van Noort returned in 1601 after completing a circumnavigation of the world, his journal of the three-year voyage was published within three weeks. The next year another five editions appeared in Dutch, French and German. In the case of Gerrit de Veer's journal, Cornelis Claesz had proved that control over the publication of a sensational travel account was essential. But Claesz was a pioneering businessman, shrewd and foresighted. He had ample capital to invest, and reputational weight to throw around. Less than ten years after his death, the market for travel journals was more crowded than ever. As a new generation sought to exploit accounts of exotic voyages, competition went beyond the normal rough and tumble of commercial life.

Certainly this was the case with the contested travel narratives of Jacob Le Maire and Willem Cornelisz Schouten, erstwhile shipmates on a tumultuous voyage of discovery to the East Indies made between 1615 and 1617.¹⁵ Their journey was a very political expedition, financed by Le Maire's father Isaac as part of his attempt to break the Asian monopoly of the VOC. Isaac, a former VOC director who had fallen out with his colleagues, conceived a daring voyage to reach Asia via the tip of South America, rather than the Strait of Magellan – the route pioneered by Ferdinand Magellan in 1520 and used by all voyagers to pass into the Pacific ever since. This was achieved: Cape Horn, the southernmost headland of Chile, takes its name from Captain Schouten's home town, Hoorn. But as the triumphant crew arrived in the East Indies in 1616, their reception at the VOC headquarters in Ternate in the Moluccas was predictably chilly. The two men were sent back to Holland essentially under armed guard: Jacob Le Maire died *en route*.

This was obviously a tale that needed telling, and both Le Maire and Schouten had kept a travel journal. Unfortunately, Le Maire's papers had been confiscated by the VOC; his angry father sued for their return. The States of Holland banned the proposed pirate edition by Willem Jansz Blaeu, who had had access to Le Maire's journal. Blaeu, frustrated in his own plans, instead published Captain Schouten's journal; or, at least, that is what he called it, though the text bore a striking resemblance to the confiscated text of Le Maire. That this work, accompanied by celebratory verse by Joost van den Vondel, was a huge commercial success, only added to father Le Maire's fury: it was, he insisted, 'a work obtained improperly, and compiled and collected by sinister means and methods.'¹⁶

The ethics of publishing were, at the least, elastic. Public interest in the Cape Horn route to the East was intense, and the expedition's surveying work redrew the map of the southern seas. Blaeu recognised both a commercial opportunity and the real need for revised navigational maps. But he had no scruples in publishing a text fraudulently obtained, or, at the very least, heavily plagiarised. Of such dealings were fortunes made. But while Blaeu had won the battle, he would not be the only one to enjoy the spoils. In the autumn of 1618 Blaeu was able to produce the first three editions of the controversial journal (two in French, one in Dutch); the first was a rushed job, printed just in time for the autumn book fair at Frankfurt. Because of the questionable origin of the journal, Blaeu did not dare ask for a privilege from the States General to protect his publication. This opened the door to Blaeu's rival Johannes Janssonius, who issued a Dutch reprint in 1618; and before Blaeu could pay for translations, other publishers in Amsterdam and Arnhem had issued Latin and German editions.

Blaeu's market was further undermined by Nicolaas van Geelkercken, who produced in 1619 a description of Joris van Spilbergen's recent circumnavigation, to which he added Schouten's journal. This addendum was a direct reprint of Blaeu's journal, confusingly claimed to have been written by Jacob Le Maire.¹⁷ This composite edition also enjoyed widespread success, and was received with such enthusiasm by the States General that they rewarded Van Spilbergen with 300 gulden.¹⁸ The immense appeal of Schouten's journal, and the Machiavellian politics of the voyage, ensured that many publishers took their share of the profits. Schouten's journal was published nearly fifty times in the seventeenth century. Poor Le Maire was less fortunate. When Isaac Le Maire recovered his son's papers in 1622 (one year after the renewal of the VOC monopoly against which he had campaigned), he published his son's authentic journal. This was produced in a beautiful folio edition by Michiel Colijn in Amsterdam in Dutch, French and Latin. Exquisite, large and truthful to the original journal, it failed to make any commercial impact.

MEN OF MAPS

The coastal towns of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland provided the Dutch Republic with a talented pool of mariners. The rough waters of the North Sea prepared the sea salts who made their way to the Indies for inevitably testing times. The art of navigation was traditionally taught on board. Young sailors were instructed by old sailors; and if the young survived, they would

gradually learn by experience. From the later sixteenth century onwards ambitious young skippers (and the curious savant) could also enrol in numerous 'schools of navigation' established in Amsterdam and the Holland ports of Enkhuizen and Hoorn.¹⁹ At such schools students were taught to use the essential tools of the navigator (compass, quadrant and cross-staff), and they were introduced to advanced mathematics and astronomy to calculate the declination of the sun and the determination of latitude, and to identify constellations while at sea. This was a delicate art, fraught with pitfalls. A ship sailing off course for a week after a mathematical inaccuracy might sign the death warrant for an underfed, scurvy-ridden crew out in the Indian Ocean. For that reason navigational instructors like Robbert Robbertsz le Canu, one of the first masters of a navigational school, were deeply respected, and made a comfortable living teaching the cream of the first generation of Dutch explorers.

To complete their education, aspirant skippers would become familiar with rutters and portolan charts. These two nautical tools were crucial for a successful voyage. Rutters (*leeskaarten*) provided detailed observations on currents, tides, depths, profiles of coasts, wind directions, sandbanks and other prominent vantage points which a skipper might encounter at sea. Portolan charts (*paskaarten*) were large maritime maps with compass lines to help establish latitude and direction.

Rutters and portolan charts were traditionally handwritten. They were the product of continual improvement and adjustment, passed down by skippers to sons and colleagues. From the late sixteenth century onwards navigators, engravers and publishers in Enkhuizen and Amsterdam made an important contribution by commercialising these nautical tools. The shipping trade was booming; and as calls went out for a maritime assault on Iberian possessions in the Indies, there was demand for the mechanical reproduction of the latest navigational information.²⁰ One of the pioneers in this field was Lucas Jansz Waghenauer of Enkhuizen, whose *Spiegel der Zeevaart* (*Mirror of Navigation*) and *Thresoor der Zeevaart* (*Treasure of Navigation*) set the standard for printed nautical handbooks. The *Spiegel* was a lavish work, as welcome in the scholar's study as the seaman's cabin. For the practically minded skipper, Waghenauer's *Thresoor* provided a more traditional rutter, albeit with a fine integration of text and delicate illustrations of coastal profiles, so essential to recognising coastlines. The *Thresoor*, like many printed rutters after it, was printed in an oblong format, which accommodated landscape illustrations with greater ease, and made the book ideal to browse through on the captain's table, where it could be consulted by several pairs of eyes.²¹



18 The great atlases caught the eye, but in practical terms, these meticulous mappings of the treacherous shoals and constantly shifting entries to the Dutch waterways, a specialty of Willem Jansz Blaeu, were vital to the nation's commerce.

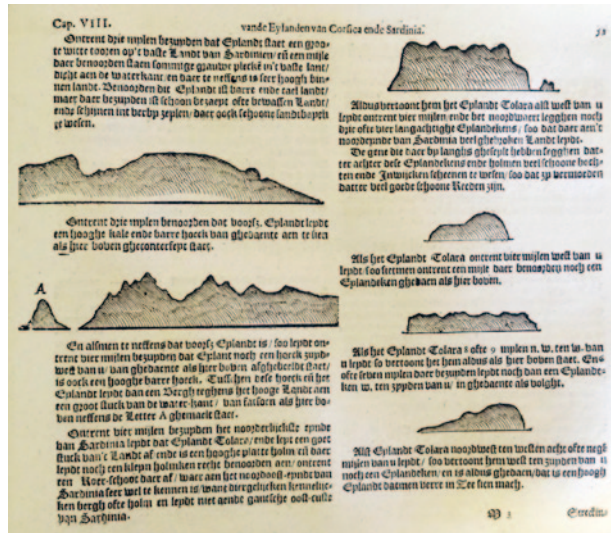
The rich variety of printed navigational tools available to the enterprising Dutch skipper around 1600 is most obvious from the catalogue of maps issued by Cornelis Claesz in 1609.²² Claesz was deeply involved not only in the publication of travel journals but also in the production and sale of the latest rutters and portolan charts. In this he worked closely with the minister-cartographer Petrus Plancius, a staunch Contra-Remonstrant and advocate for Dutch overseas expansion, who later became one of the directors of the VOC. In his catalogue, Claesz advertised for sale many loose engraved maritime maps, in addition to the latest navigational handbooks. Portolans were not cheap: they required an exquisitely fine engraving, were printed on parchment for durability, and had to be hand-coloured for optimum use. Most pre-coloured printed portolans in stock with Claesz were advertised for around 1 to 2.5 gulden apiece. He also kept in store 'handwritten portolan charts . . . drawn by the best cartographers', for those who wished to purchase

immediate access to the latest information which had not yet been incorporated in print.²³

During the seventeenth century the publication of nautical handbooks would remain a specialism of the Dutch book trade. This was a high-entry market, requiring talented engravers and well-capitalised publishers, but it promised great riches for those who persevered. Although built to last, these practical texts wore out through use, and they could be made redundant by new discoveries or treacherous shifts in the shoals and sandbanks surrounding the Dutch coast. The Amsterdam publisher Johannes Janssonius van Waesberghe, advertising a variety of portolan charts in a catalogue in 1677, anxiously requested his customers to provide him with any corrections if they noticed mistakes in the maps, so he could update the engravings.²⁴ Accuracy was of the essence. But the perpetual necessity to improve older maps ensured that customers would keep coming back to the bookshop for the latest portolans and maritime atlases.

The fortunes of the famous publishing house of Blaeu was entirely founded on the trade in maps and navigational handbooks. Willem Jansz Blaeu, the son of a North Holland herring merchant, made his name in the 1590s as a talented globemaker and cartographer in Amsterdam.²⁵ Blaeu had studied under the distinguished Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe, and steadily built a reputation for cartographical excellence. In 1608 he published his first book, the *Licht der See-Vaert* (*Light of Navigation*), a popular nautical handbook compiled by Blaeu himself, in the style of Lucas Jansz Waghenaer.²⁶ Blaeu bought heavily at the auction of the books of Cornelis Claesz in 1610, building a large stock of navigational books and maps.²⁷ In the 1620s and 1630s his workshop in Amsterdam would grow to become one of the most active printing houses in the country, producing editions of the classics, poetry, literature and (controversially so) Catholic devotional works.²⁸ But Blaeu's personal interest would always rest with the literature of travel and cartography. He was at the forefront of the publication of Willem Schouten's journal in 1618, and would write and print two more works of navigation himself.

Blaeu was a skilled mapmaker, but he was not alone. He had serious competitors working in Amsterdam and The Hague, men like Balthasar Florisz, Hessel Gerritsz, the brothers Hondius and Claes Jansz Visscher.²⁹ Blaeu also had to reckon with the increasing influence of the VOC. Since 1616 employees of the VOC were obliged to hand in all their written accounts and observations of their voyages to the directors. In 1619 the company was granted a monopoly by the States General for the publication



19 Navigational publications with topographical representations of coastal landfalls were typographically complex, but for seafarers they played a vital role in ensuring a safe homecoming.

of all maps related to the East Indies. Now that the VOC had firmly established itself as the dominant power in the East Indies, the early period of open cartographical competition gave way to a policy of secrecy and containment not unlike that maintained by the Portuguese crown in the sixteenth century.

For a while this politicisation of Dutch cartography was a blow to Blaeu's fortunes. In the aftermath of the Remonstrant crisis, the VOC was wary of any elements within the ranks which were tainted by controversy. Blaeu's Remonstrant sympathies caused him to be passed over by the company directors when they appointed Hessel Gerritsz as their first official cartographer. This prestigious position granted the lucky mapmaker access to all VOC maps (and hence the latest nautical information), and the exclusive privilege to supply handwritten and printed maps to VOC officials. Only after Gerritsz's death in 1632 did Blaeu become the official cartographer of the company; he was also appointed as one of the examiners of VOC skippers. The steady income derived from these posts underpinned the publishing business of the family Blaeu until the end of the seventeenth century.

By the 1620s the VOC was secure in its monopoly over the East Indies trade, and the directors had little incentive to make publicity for their company. The Dutch West India Company (WIC), founded in 1621, had

jurisdiction over all Dutch ventures in the Americas and the west coast of Africa. Its establishment had been hotly contested, and postponed by several years as part of the agreement with Spain in the Twelve Years' Truce. When the war was renewed, the directors of the WIC employed all media forces at their disposal to generate support and recruit investors for the new company.³⁰ Early successes in Brazil were memorialised in news maps by Claes Jansz Visscher and Hessel Gerritsz, while Gerritsz also travelled to the West Indies to gain first-hand information on the region's topography.

The maps drawn by Gerritsz in the New World were used in another WIC publicity piece, written by one of its directors, the scholar-merchant Joannes de Laet. De Laet produced a very fine description of the Americas, published in several magnificent editions by the Elzeviers in Leiden, in Dutch, Latin and French.³¹ De Laet listed in his preface the titles of forty travel journals and descriptions which he used to compile his book, taken first from Spanish, Portuguese, French, English and now Dutch voyagers, as well as many handwritten journals from WIC captains. The description was, in effect, an advertisement for the riches of the New World and its suitability for conquest and settlement. Only available as a folio of 600 pages, De Laet's description was destined for an elite book-buying audience, intended to persuade wealthy merchants to invest in the company.

This was also true of De Laet's second publication on the Americas, the *Historie ofte jaerlijck verhael van de verrichtingen der West-Indische Compagnie* (*History or Annual Report of the Exploits of the West India Company*), which appeared in 1644. This was a 500-page enumeration of the successes of the WIC, including statistics on the accumulated financial and material damage done to the Spanish crown, and the wealth accrued by the Dutch. It too was a book of beautiful typography and design, but was too late to save the WIC. Within a decade of publication, the Dutch had been beaten out of Brazil by the Portuguese, never to return.

De Laet's work was certainly a literary success: the Groningen professor Jacques Oisel owned no fewer than three editions of the *Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (*Description of the West Indies*). Yet when Oisel's collection was sold in 1688 his copy of the 1625 folio edition sold for no more than 6 stuivers – a negligible price for a book which sold originally for around 8 gulden.³² De Laet's meticulous scholarship and bombastic calls for more investment in the WIC sat largely unused on library shelves, testament to a time when the possibilities for the Dutch abroad seemed unlimited. As the WIC floundered, the only echo of its media strategy in print could be found

in newspapers, in which the company advertised for settlers to move to its North American colony, New Netherland.³³

SHIPWRECK HERO

In the 1640s Captain Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe achieved the rare distinction of becoming a bestselling author, a national hero and a household name, all deep into his retirement. To Bontekoe this fame was entirely unexpected, and perchance even unwanted. Bontekoe, then nearly sixty years old, was a devout man, living in a small house on the Zeemanskade in the North Holland town of Hoorn, one of the Republic's major ports. Like most inhabitants of Hoorn, Bontekoe had made his living from the sea. Every day, stepping outside his front door, the old captain would have set his eyes on the choppy waters of the Zuiderzee, the masts and topsails of East Indiamen, and the innumerable smaller fishing vessels lying before the port. The sea had made his career, but it had also nearly cost him his life.

As a young skipper in the 1610s Bontekoe traded in the Mediterranean, and on one voyage was enslaved by Barbary pirates, an unfortunate fate suffered by many of his compatriots. Bontekoe was lucky, however, and was ransomed by friends and family at home. After his safe return to Hoorn, he enlisted with the VOC, and received a commission to command the *Nieuw Hoorn*, bound for the East Indies. Bontekoe sailed out on 28 December 1618 with 206 crew on board. Eleven months later, while the *Nieuw Hoorn* was nearing her destination on Java, the ship's brandy supply caught fire. Bontekoe led attempts to quell the fire, but it spread quickly, and reached the gunpowder store. Over half the crew perished as the munitions exploded; miraculously, Bontekoe and one other were flung from the ship into the Indian Ocean. They were picked up by those who had abandoned ship before it went up in flames.

The survivors drifted for many days at sea, with no delivery in sight. The sailors collected some rainwater to drink, and ate the flying fish which flopped into their sloops, but nevertheless endured agonising hunger, thirst and exhaustion. At one point the crew decided they would eat one or two of the surviving cabin boys; Bontekoe intervened, and urged the men to wait three days. He led them in prayer for the next three days, at the end of which they sighted the coast of Sumatra. Their trial, however, was not yet over, for the crew were attacked by a tribe of Sumatrans, and several were killed or captured. After making their escape, Bontekoe and his remaining band were spotted by passing East Indiamen as they neared Java. After the disastrous

voyage Bontekoe stayed in the East Indies, employed by the VOC on an expedition around the Chinese coast (during which he narrowly survived a hurricane), and finally made his way back to Holland in 1625, almost seven years after his departure.

Captain Bontekoe enjoyed a peaceful retirement in Hoorn until his death in 1657, understandably determined to leave the adventurous seafaring life to a new generation. Many inhabitants of Hoorn would have heard Bontekoe's story; it would have been retold in local taverns for many years, and Bontekoe's name was undoubtedly toasted by friends, acquaintances and the odd traveller passing through. Around 1645 the tale came to the attention of Jan Jansz Deutel, a Hoorn bookseller and rhetorician. Deutel was a devout Mennonite, whose business rested on the publication of Bibles, songbooks and devotional literature for the spiritual benefit of the substantial Mennonite community in North Holland. Deutel saw in Bontekoe's tale a story of trial, divine intervention and redemption. It was Deutel who would bring Bontekoe everlasting fame.

In the summer of 1646 Deutel published the *Journael ofte Gedenckwaerdige Beschryvinghe van de Oost-Indische Reyse* (*Journal or Memorable Description of the East Indian Voyage*) of Captain Bontekoe.³⁴ In a preface dedicated to the VOC chamber in Hoorn, Deutel recounted that when he had urged the retired captain to publish the story, the modest Bontekoe was not sure whether he should oblige: he was old, his memory was fading and he did not have access to his original travel journal, which had blown up with his ship. Bontekoe was doubtful whether his account, containing little of navigational value, should be printed at all. Yet 'finally, after many friendly requests and encouragement by some of [Bontekoe's] friends, he obliged'.³⁵

In an address to the reader Deutel apologised for Bontekoe's uncultured, vernacular style. The old captain was not an experienced writer: 'for which I pray you forgive the author . . . because he has tried to describe his journey with more regard for truth than gracefulness'.³⁶ Deutel, however, was to be pleasantly surprised. Bontekoe's journal became the bestselling travel journal of the seventeenth century, thanks in part to the simple and god-fearing tone that came so easily to him in his old age. This gives the journal its narrative pace, marking a decisive change from previous travel accounts. As the *Nieuw Hoorn* explodes, Bontekoe describes what he perceives to be his final moment with pious grace:

And I, Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe . . . also flew into the air, certain that this is how I would die, raising my hands and arms towards the

heavens, and shouted: now I sail to you, O Lord! Be merciful to your poor sinner.³⁷

As the surviving crew debated whether to eat the cabin boys, Bontekoe held firm. As the stipulated third day came to an end, the tension became unbearable – until Bontekoe, his crew and the reader are released from their torment by the sight of land:

As soon as I reached land, I fell upon my knees and kissed the earth in happiness, and I thanked God for his mercy and charity, for providing a resolution to this affair; for this day was the last, after which the crew was resolved to grab the boys and eat them. Thus it became clear that the Lord is the best skipper, who guides us and steers us towards land.³⁸

Deutel was aware that he was marketing a different journal for a new age. By the 1640s the Dutch were no longer looking for new straits, or islands from which to expel Portuguese colonists. Genuine discoveries were closely guarded by the VOC. The route taken by Bontekoe in 1618–1619 was entirely conventional by the time the travel journal appeared. The voyages of Van Linschoten, De Veer and Spilbergen were exciting, but included valuable new information for Dutch traders and skippers. At the same time, the earlier travel narratives could be a little dry in their scientific observations: the journal of Joris van Spilbergen's voyages to Sri Lanka in 1601 and 1602 contained at the end a table of the wind direction and course of his journey. Useful for some, but hardly easy reading.

It was precisely this broader audience that Deutel was cultivating with the publication of Bontekoe. The journal was accompanied by eight fold-out engravings displaying the tribulations of the journey: the explosion of the ship, the attacks by the indigenous Sumatrans, the flying fish and the collecting of rainwater. For dramatic effect, Deutel published at the end of the Bontekoe narrative the short journal of Captain Dirck Albertsz Raven, who undertook a voyage to Spitsbergen in 1639 for the Greenland company in which he lost his ship and many of the crew: another narrative remarkable not for its discoveries but for the hardships experienced by the captain and his men. Deutel also included the story of seven Dutch men who froze and starved to death on Spitsbergen in 1634, and two other short stories of hardship at sea.

Bontekoe's journal was a roaring success. Deutel had the first edition printed locally in Hoorn in 1646, but as the first copies flew out of his shop,

he rushed to publish a second edition, appealing for the assistance of the prominent Haarlem printer Thomas Fonteyn. This edition also sold out and, within five years of publication, at least seventeen editions had been printed across the Dutch Republic. Another thirty would follow by the end of the seventeenth century. Given that most of these editions were read to pieces, and can only be traced today in one or a few surviving copies, it is possible that there were many more editions of Bontekoe's sensational tale.

Captain Bontekoe undoubtedly witnessed the success of his journal, but like most authors of his day, did not receive a share of the sales.³⁹ Instead it was Deutel who profited most from the early success of Bontekoe's tale. The extraordinary popularity of the journal still took him by surprise, and when printers in Utrecht and Rotterdam produced multiple editions in 1647, Deutel responded indignantly. In 1648 he published a third edition, in which he vented his anger with his colleagues in the trade. It was improper, he suggested, that others should profit so easily from his efforts to find, edit



20 A stirring tale of providential deliverance. Here the crew are nourished with sea birds and flying fish, and the cabin boys live on.

and finance the publication of a book. Deutel could have appealed to the authorities for a privilege to protect his investments, but he desisted, afraid that close inspection of Bontekoe's journal might cause the VOC to intervene and halt publication altogether. This he did not mention, instead placing an exasperated appeal:

Some will say: you did not have a privilege for the publication. That is true, but does one always need to be armed with the bodyguard or convoy of privilege? We truly live in a time of robbery and greed. Is the law of nature (being: what you do not wish to have done to yourself, do not do so to another) not enough privilege for me, to live among reasonable people?⁴⁰

This was the rhetoric of an irritated yet helpless businessman. The devout Mennonite bookseller knew that the trade was driven by plagiarism and competition. But was that all so bad? The demand for Bontekoe outstripped the production capital of any single publisher; an honest observer could hardly blame printers across the country for taking advantage of that. By the 1660s some publishing houses, like the Lootsman–De Groot family in Amsterdam, treated the production of Bontekoe's journal like an annual job. New batches were reprinted using an older copy as a composition text, leading to virtually indistinguishable editions.

The publication of Bontekoe had demonstrated that the market for travel journals was undergoing a decisive shift. The literature of discovery had become the literature of sensation. One man who perceived this transformation was the Amsterdam printer Gillis Joosten Saeghman, nephew of the newspaper publisher Broer Jansz. In the early 1660s Saeghman sought to exploit popular demand for travel journals by marketing a new brand, designed for smaller purses and more sensational tastes.

In an advertisement in the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* of 25 May 1664 Saeghman announced the publication of twenty travel journals, all for sale at his shop in the Nieuwestraat.⁴¹ The list of new editions contained all the stories familiar to Dutch readers. There was the quintessential Bontekoe, and all the triumphant heroes of Dutch exploration from the early seventeenth century: Willem Barentsz, Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, Joris van Spilbergen and Olivier van Noort. Saeghman added to the illustrious tales more sensational stories of shipwreck and heartbreak, with accounts of disastrous voyages to Greenland, the sinking of the ship *Batavia* off the coast of Australia, the stranding of seven sailors on Spitsbergen, and seven



21 Branding the travels. Saeghman used this woodcut of two vessels on every one of his reissued travel series, all of which were further enriched with vivid images like this llama.

similarly unlucky sailors on Mauritius. That the collection also had a political edge was made clear by the inclusion of a new edition of Bartolomé de las Casas' account of Spanish tyranny in the West Indies.⁴² The most richly illustrated text issued by Saeghman as part of the new collection, the *Vermeerderden Spieghel der Spaensche Tierannijs* (*Enlarged Mirror of Spanish Tyranny*), displayed in gruesome detail the cruelties inflicted upon the indigenous populations of the Americas by Spanish conquistadors. Saeghman opened his text with an address to the directors of the West and East India Companies, thanking them for all their efforts to challenge the Spanish oppression of the New World, and expressing his hope that the account would awaken similar admiration for the Dutch trading companies in other readers. It was worth remembering why the Dutch had sailed the seven seas.

The twenty new journals issued by Saeghman were identical in layout and design.⁴³ The title-pages all featured the same woodcut of two ships; on the first verso there was an image of Fame or a portrait of the heroic captain whose journal was in one's hand. The text was set in double columns, which made for easier reading for the novice bibliophile. A number of woodcut illustrations were set in the text, displaying ships, battles, strange beasts or depictions of indigenous customs. Saeghman went to great lengths to keep this collection uniform. Most of the items in the new collection were published on sixty-four pages in quarto. The story of the epic circumnavigation of Joris

van Spilbergen between 1614 and 1617 was already finished by page 62, so Saeghman added a 'short story of the Americans, about their appearance, life, sustenance and other curiosities, to fill out this additional page.'⁴⁴

With this branded series, Saeghman injected new blood into the literary genre. Saeghman styled himself 'ordinary printer of the sea journals and land voyages', implying that his new series had a semi-official status. This was entirely spurious, but it acknowledged the creativity that Saeghman brought to the market. He did not simply reprint the texts: most of the journals were reduced in length, shortening especially sections with little more than navigational descriptions. The journals published by Saeghman instead placed the disasters, tribulations and exotic animals and peoples of America, Africa and Asia at the centre. In doing so Saeghman also went to great lengths to save production costs: most illustrations were older woodcuts (not the 'fine engravings' he promised in his newspaper advertisement), repurposed with mixed results. The supposed portrait of Jan Huyghen van Linschoten was in fact a portrait of the Spanish commander Mondragon.

While perhaps not the most accurate versions, Saeghman's journals did provide more choice than ever for a readership of modest means. Judging by the survival of his journals, most buyers chose a selection of the twenty, picking their favourites, and arranging them according to their own desire. Saeghman played an important part in embedding Dutch travel narratives in the national consciousness of the Dutch Golden Age.

THE GREAT ATLAS

At the same time as Gillis Joosten Saeghman announced the publication of his travel journals, the greatest publishing project of the Dutch Golden Age was in full swing. This was the *Atlas Maior*, the great atlas, produced by the Amsterdam cartographer-publisher Joan Blaeu, the son of Willem Jansz Blaeu. Published in five editions – Latin, French, Dutch, German and Spanish – over the course of a decade (1662–1672), the *Atlas Maior* was a publishing project of fantastic proportions.⁴⁵ Each edition featured around 600 copperplate engravings, surrounded by copious topographical descriptions, altogether comprising between nine and twelve volumes in folio. Blaeu's atlas, the largest ever published, was the most expensive book for sale in the Dutch Republic, at the price of 430 to 460 gulden for a copy with hand-coloured maps. One could buy around 2,000 copies of a Bontekoe journal for a single *Atlas Maior*.



22 Joan Blaeu, pictured at the height of his fame, a rich man and a member of the city council. It was a measure of the status of publishing in the Dutch Republic that this former artisan trade could propel its greatest exponents into the front ranks of Dutch society.

Painstakingly produced on Blaeu's nine printing presses and six copperplate presses, the *Atlas Maior* was the ultimate symbol of Dutch typographical excellence. Joan Blaeu had to deploy immense capital resources to finance the project, capital amassed in part by his father's innovative and original contributions to navigation, cartography and the book trade earlier in the century. In the 1660s, as the Dutch Golden Age reached its apogee, it was the younger Blaeu's task to utilise this capital for the greatest, grandest, most ambitious project of the Dutch Golden Age. The Dutch had sailed every sea where money could be made; they had established a global empire and raised themselves to unimagined political heights, seated among divinely appointed monarchs. The great atlas celebrated the new Dutch role in this expanded world. With the air of the self-indulgent bourgeois patrician, Blaeu mused in his preface that there was no 'greater delight . . . than with our very own eyes to survey the realms and conditions of so many kings and potentates'.⁴⁶

The *Atlas Maior* was, in many ways, a vanity project. Blaeu, not only a publisher but one of the aldermen of Amsterdam, wished for his achievement to be acknowledged throughout Europe. He dedicated the Latin edition of the atlas to Emperor Leopold I of Austria, and presented to him a copy bound in purple velvet, with the dedicatory pages printed with gold ink on red paper. The French edition was presented to King Louis XIV, again in a magnificent binding. When this stunning gift elicited no response, a year later Blaeu sent another copy to Louis's minister of finance, Jean-Baptiste Colbert, in the hope that this would stir the king to some gracious message. It was again greeted with silence. Despite the snub from Louis, the *Atlas Maior* did cement the Blaeu name for ever as the hallmark of cartographical prowess. Blaeu maps, as in the seventeenth century, continue to adorn the walls of many homes today.

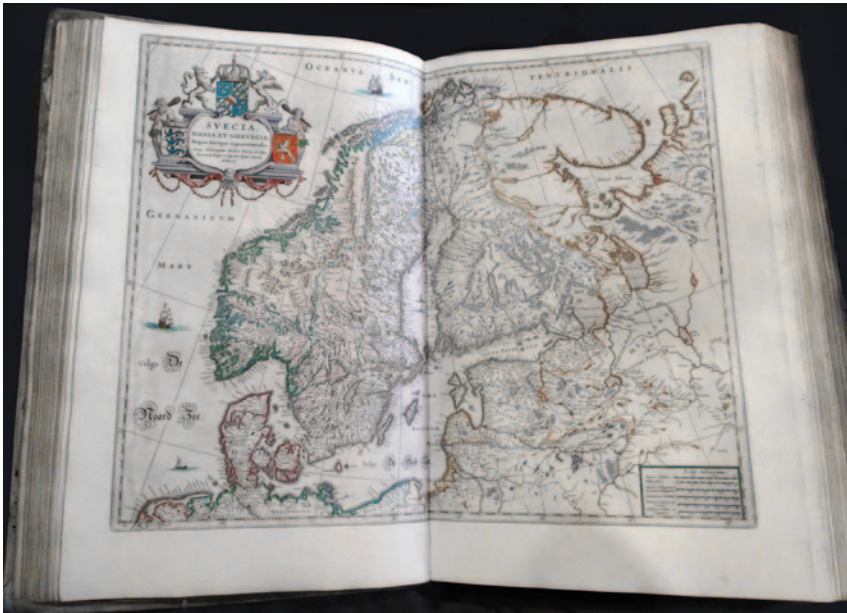
For its price, its size, its beauty and its illustrious owners, the *Atlas Maior* is often held up as the zenith of the book trade in the Dutch Golden Age. Indeed, the capital required for the project could only have been raised in the wealthiest and most sophisticated market for print in Europe. An attempt to produce an English version of the *Atlas Maior* in London came to a grinding halt in the 1680s.⁴⁷ But the great atlas was hardly typical of the Dutch book trade: a fluid, integrated and busy market in which printers, publishers, engravers and booksellers from around the country worked together to maximise profit and minimise risk, investing most of their time in printing short, cheap books for markets with secure demand or for sale to institutional clients.

The production of atlases was, for a good reason, limited to a tiny segment of the Dutch book trade. This was a type of book which very few publishers could attempt. The maps which were printed in atlases had to be cut as copperplates: a highly skilled and therefore expensive task. Every map required a new copperplate, and therefore an atlas, made up of dozens or hundreds of maps, required significant investment. The publisher also had to have access to a copperplate press, as engravings were printed in intaglio, and could not be set on a regular printing press using relief printing techniques.

So atlas-printing could only be taken on by the best-capitalised publishers; and the result, it need not be stated, was a product for the wealthiest of book buyers, the class of regents and professors. The *Atlas Maior* cost several hundred gulden, and if smaller atlases might sell for 25 or 50 gulden, they would remain considerable investments. Simply buying an atlas at retail price was not the only cost: the colouring of the maps, depending on the quality of the colourist, might add another 50 or 100 gulden to the price.

And for a multi-volume atlas, one soon also required a customised case of walnut, mahogany or olive wood in which it could be kept. The atlas was, like globes or cabinets of curiosities, an item presented as much as part of the accoutrements of sophistication and scholarship as it was used for consultation. It was a book to impress visitors or bestow upon a worthy dignitary. Dutch authorities frequently used the *Atlas Maior* as a distinguished gift: Admiral Michiel de Ruyter received one from the States of Zeeland in 1666, and the Ottoman Sultan was presented with a copy two years later by the States General. This was a precious book in any collection. If sold at auction, Blaeu atlases were generally listed as the first lot of the folios.

The foundations for Blaeu's atlas were laid around 1600, when the city of Amsterdam became the centre of atlas-printing in Europe.⁴⁸ Cornelis Claesz and Jodocus Hondius (another Southern Netherlander who found his fortune in the north), bought the copperplates cut by Gerardus Mercator, one of the pioneers of modern cartography and atlas-making. Claesz and Hondius expanded Mercator's *Atlas* in the early 1600s, producing a collection of around 150 maps known as the Mercator-Hondius atlas. While Hondius also produced a pocket-sized atlas, the *Atlas Minor*, it was the



23 The first volume of the Dutch *Atlas Maior*: a complete set would have weighed over 70 kilos and cost the equivalent of a year's salary for a minister of the Dutch Church.

larger folio atlas which would become the standard of publication, and which determined the size of most maps.

Jodocus Hondius had two sons, Jodocus II and Henricus, who took over the family business after their father's death in 1612. In the 1620s the brothers fell out, and Jodocus II decided to produce his own atlas, for which he cut forty newly engraved maps. He died in 1629, just before finishing the project. It was Willem Jansz Blaeu, now a well-established and wealthy publisher, who bought the new copperplates cut by Jodocus II. Blaeu put his own name on the maps and published his first atlas, which catapulted him into direct competition with Henricus Hondius. By this point Henricus was working closely with his brother-in-law, Johannes Janssonius, already a notorious rival of Blaeu. Janssonius owned a workshop next door to Blaeu's, and frequently reprinted his navigational manuals, travel journals and other works. Their greatest competition, however, would be over the atlas.

Between 1630 and 1658 the two families were engaged in an atlas war. The chief protagonists were Janssonius and Joan Blaeu, as Hondius soon retired from the business and the elder Blaeu passed away. By 1640 Janssonius and Blaeu had each published three large volumes of atlases covering most regions of the world, yet they kept expanding their repertoire. Both men were gifted publishers and cartographers, but their rivalry forced them to prefer quantity over quality. As the two men struggled to increase the number of volumes, they often resorted to copying each other's maps, or claiming maps were brand new and lately revised when they were forty years old. The atlases were not balanced: a quarter of Blaeu's maps covered only Great Britain.

Despite their deficiencies, the series of atlases produced by Janssonius and Blaeu were unrivalled in Europe. By 1658, both men had six-volume atlases of the world, in addition to topographies of the ancient world, maritime atlases and surveys of cities, in Blaeu's case the magnificent *Toonneel der Steden* (*Theatre of Cities*), covering the cities of the Low Countries. Janssonius had published around 450 maps in total, and Blaeu nearer 400. By amassing a vast stock of copperplates, they had effectively divided the market between them. Both men now had plans for an *Atlas Maior*, but it would be Blaeu who succeeded. In 1662 Blaeu sold his bookselling business to raise the necessary capital for the final great project. Janssonius died in 1664, witnessing his rival's triumph before his death. Yet Blaeu's final moments were anything but glorious. In February 1672 Blaeu's copperplate workshop on the Gravenstraat burned to the ground. The shop had stored in it most of the copperplates for his atlases and many unsold copies of the

recently completed Spanish *Atlas Maior*. The damages caused by the fire were estimated at an exorbitant 382,000 gulden by Jan van der Heyden, the inventor of a new firehose, and 60,000 to 70,000 gulden by Daniel Elzevier, one of Blaeu's colleagues.⁴⁹ It is difficult to say who was closer to the truth, but it is certain that the fire crippled Blaeu's business and ensured that his atlas could never be printed again. Blaeu died the next year, having also lost his prestigious seat on the Amsterdam council in the repercussions of the Disaster Year.

ARMCHAIR TRAVELLERS

The atlas war between Janssonius and Blaeu left behind a saturated market. The revenue raised when the remaining atlases and copperplates of both firms were auctioned between 1674 and 1677 was underwhelming. Only in London was there heightened excitement, as the bookseller Moses Pitt issued an advertisement to his customers in the form of a *Catalogue of the great atlas or general geography of John Janssonius deceased*, as sold in Amsterdam in November in 1675.⁵⁰ Pitt urged his customers to inform him which atlases they wished to bid for, charging a 2 shillings and 6 pence reservation fee.

The success of Dutch atlases was partly founded on their popularity abroad, where there were plenty of wealthy courtiers and nobles eager to acquire such impressive volumes. These discerning collectors were less keen to find space in their libraries for Bontekoe and other sensational travel narratives that enjoyed such widespread popularity with Dutch readers. To one ambitious Amsterdam publisher this reticence represented a real opportunity to offer wealthy bibliophiles a new way to enjoy Dutch literature of the exotic. This was Jacob van Meurs, who, during the course of the 1660s and 1670s, produced a series of magnificent folio descriptions of exotic lands, designed to sit comfortably on the shelves of elite collectors and savants.⁵¹

Van Meurs' series of works covered the most mysterious of places – China, Japan, India, Africa, America, Arabia, Persia and the Holy Land. Each book provided a literary cocktail of history, exploration, politics, topography and ethnography, weaving in the latest discoveries and travel accounts written by explorers around Europe. Van Meurs made use of the help of two authors: Arnold Montanus and Olfert Dapper. Neither was a well-travelled explorer, but both were diligent scholars with an eye for a good story. Montanus was a minister and Latin school rector, and had a

brother who worked in the East Indies as a preacher. Dapper was a very studious Amsterdam physician, who had taken to writing after producing a popular description of his home town.

These two scholars furnished Van Meurs with the material for his series of exotic descriptions, while the publisher took on the financing and the marketing of the books. Van Meurs ensured that the series had a recognisable appearance and layout. Most books were around 1,000 pages in length, and lavishly illustrated with large maps and engravings depicting cities, ports, portraits, executions, palaces, temples and exotic customs. Montanus's book on Japan, published in 1669, contained 95 engravings accompanying 456 pages of text. At the price of 7 to 12 gulden apiece, the volumes were, like the atlases of Blaeu and Janssonius, destined for an elite readership.⁵² Van Meurs marketed the works for an international audience by financing translations for most titles into French and German. Thanks to his efforts, Olfert Dapper and Arnold Montanus became household names in the drawing rooms of Paris, Brussels and Vienna, and sets of Dappers adorned the shelves of many large libraries in the Dutch Republic.

Van Meurs had created a successful new genre of travel writing. But a court case from the 1670s demonstrates that all was not well, and that Van Meurs' finances were troubled.⁵³ The publisher had seriously overstretched himself, overestimating the print runs of his titles. When Van Meurs' only child Sara married the merchant Otto Koper in 1674, he promised his son-in-law a massive dowry of 12,000 gulden. Four years later not a single gulden had been paid, and Van Meurs offered instead to pay Koper in books, all priced at 3 gulden apiece (significantly lower than the retail price of a Dapper or Montanus volume). Van Meurs passed on to Koper 2,800 copies of his folio works by Montanus and Dapper, all without the engravings, which had not yet been printed. The illustrations were crucial to the appeal of the series, and for Koper, who had no previous experience in the book industry, nearly 1 million sheets of printed paper, and the obligation to find a copperplate press to produce another 150,000 engravings to make them a saleable proposition, represented something of a poisoned chalice.

The sad end of the unillustrated Dappers, rotting away in an Amsterdam warehouse, presents a stark contrast to the copies of Bontekoe's journal flying out of the printshop. Van Meurs' struggles demonstrate that the publishers who traded in the literature of discovery and travel were by no means safer from ruin than the captains who wrote up their journals, dodging disaster and shipwreck. Today the works of Van Meurs, Blaeu and Janssonius command enormous prices at auction or in the antiquarian

market. Dappers and atlases still decorate the shelves of many prestigious collections, private and institutional. In their own age these were businessmen who risked all, with mixed success. To that they justly owe their fame. But that renown deserves to be shared with the tales of discovery and hardship, the little journals which were reprinted year after year. Their contribution to the book trade, injecting new life into the market and reaching new generations of readers, may have been even greater.

PART II

PILLARS OF THE TRADE

CHAPTER FIVE



The Marketplace of Devotion

BY 1622 VOYAGES TO the East Indies had become routine, if still perilous and unpredictable. This was a long voyage, so the provisioning of the store and the stocking of the hold were important matters, involving balancing a sufficient supply of the necessities of life with goods that could be carried for trade and profit. So it is all the more remarkable that the captain of a small, crowded VOC vessel setting off in this year also carried a considerable consignment of over three hundred books.¹ And these were books of a particular kind, exclusively in Dutch and exclusively devotional in character. There was a ship's Bible, naturally, but also a second large volume, a copy of Calvin's *Institutes*. Four works of anti-Catholic polemic, including the *Spiegel der Jeught* (*Mirror of Youth*) and *Spaensche Tyrannye* (*Spanish Tyranny*), would act as a constant reminder of the true nature of the Iberian enemy, whose overseas territories had been so successfully plundered by the Dutch during the Twelve Years' Truce.² The vessel also found room for twenty-five copies of Adam Westerman's *Christelijcke Zee-vaert* (*Christian Sea Voyage*), a book, as the title suggests, specifically addressed to the needs of sailors. This was a fantastically successful text. The first known surviving edition, from 1630, is described as the seventh improved edition. An edition by a rival publisher issued the following year is described as his fifth edition. Between them, these two publishers, Marten Jansz Brandt and Broer Jansz, published ten editions of which every copy has now disappeared; and the two editions that have survived are known from only a single copy. As we will see later in this chapter, this was a common experience for the sort of devotional texts that were destined for everyday use. But even so, that ten editions of the *Christelijcke Zee-vaert* should have disappeared completely before any copies survive is a somewhat extreme case, and a mark of the circumstances in which they were read, in cramped conditions on board, or in the humid, sweaty East Indies, scarcely ideal for the preservation of books.

The books on board, it was made clear in the loading instructions, were not intended for sale when the ship reached its destination but for the use of

the crew and its passengers during the long voyage. The *Christelijke Zee-vaert* was particularly appropriate, intended, as Westerman expressed it in his preface, as 'a small anchor, compass, helm or staff' for those at sea.³ At its core were two dozen sermons providing consolation for sailors and travellers, and intended to strengthen their resolve in the face of storms, bad weather, the loss of their friends, or the general discomfort and isolation of being away from home for months on end. The work also includes the text of twenty prayers to be said by or for sailors and travellers, and four songs.

Most prominent among the consignment of books on board were no fewer than 120 copies of the psalms. These may well have been copies of a *Scheepspsalmbboek* (a psalm book for mariners), editions with commentaries specific to the needs of those sailing the oceans. These sold in huge numbers in the Dutch Republic. When the Amsterdam bookseller Hendrik Botterenbroot died in 1707, his stock contained no fewer than 900 *Scheepspsalmbboeken*.⁴ It is a reminder of how crowded these ships were, crammed with up to two hundred crew and an unspecified number of passengers. But when they gathered each successive Sunday, they would be well supplied with the necessary aids to worship. For those of a more contemplative disposition, there were twenty-five copies of Arnold's *Vader Onze* (*Our Father*) and the *Vaste Grond des Geloofs* (*Firm Foundation of Faith*).⁵ The list specified that all of these books carried on board in groups of twenty-five, eight titles in all, finely balanced between anti-Catholic polemic and more sober devotional texts, were to be shared one to each group of sailors bunking and eating together, so that the literate could help those who could not read, and the crew could study together. In the same spirit, along with the 120 copies of the psalms, probably about one for every second soul on board, were nine copies with notes for those able to read music.

These then were not trade goods, but essential supplies for a successful voyage. The Dutch Reformed Church did not completely ignore the spiritual needs of the indigenous populations whom the Dutch encountered abroad. In the year after this voyage, and certainly before any of the crew had returned home, the printer of the States General published a catechism in Malay.⁶ Before the end of the decade, and at the behest of the VOC, a New Testament was published in parallel Dutch and Malay texts: an aid to those seeking to learn the new language, or, more optimistically, local converts eager to learn Dutch. This was published in Enkhuizen, a major port in the north of Holland, but not a major centre of typography; a 1638 reprint was orchestrated by Marten Jansz Brandt in Amsterdam.



24 Divine service in a village church. The congregation is singing a psalm, with the *voorsanger* (cantor) keeping time. Even in this very humble church, many of those present have brought their own copies of the printed text.

These were worthy ventures, but little came of these promising beginnings. The Dutch colonists were never popular with the local peoples, too focused on profit to care much for the spiritual health of those whose work and crops they exploited, often with little scruple. In 1641 a consignment of 3,000 trilingual catechisms, in Portuguese, Tupi and Dutch, was commissioned by the West Indian Company for export to Brazil. This was a controversial project and was eventually consigned to an Enkhuizen publisher. It seems the settlers also had their doubts. Four years later, 2,951 copies of this edition were still gathering dust in a Brazilian warehouse.⁷

The Dutch colonists, then, were by and large far more concerned to explore the riches of the colonial empire than bring spiritual succour to the local peoples. There is nothing in the Dutch narrative to compare with the heroic missionary efforts of the Jesuits in Japan, China and Vietnam. But the overseas companies certainly took seriously the spiritual needs of their crews and the settler community. They might have been separated from home, from loved ones and their churches; but the devotional world of the

new Dutch Republic would travel with them. For many, indeed, these books would be a final consolation; of the two hundred or more men packed into a typical VOC ship, fewer than half could expect to see the Republic again. Of our list of books on board the vessel of 1622, a single copy of fourteen texts, including Westerman, the Bible and catechism, were reserved to the *siekentroosters*, those charged with ensuring the health of the crew, and, all too often, nursing the men through their last illness.

Thus far in this book the story of Dutch religion has been a story of controversy. And this was real. The quarrels between the professors over doctrine posed a serious challenge to the Calvinist identity of the new Dutch state, particularly when this became a metaphor for the wider crisis of identity between Holland and the confederate provinces, and between the regents and the Orange family. Like all quarrels that began within a religious family, the disputes were bitter, and the consequences serious. The church voluntarily deprived itself of a fair proportion of its most talented and eloquent preachers; the defeated nursed their wounds in resentment, looking for new causes that would signal their continuing defiance of the Contra-Remonstrant hegemony. And Remonstrant sympathisers in the Holland regent class, shocked and appalled by the popular resentment harnessed by Stadhouder Maurice to humble them, had one crucial weapon left in their armoury – they appointed the ministers and paid their salaries. So while the Contra-Remonstrants were for the moment in command, their wider aspirations for Dutch society, to impose a more perfect Calvinist discipline on both church and wider society, could still be thwarted. Despite the representations of the Calvinist synods, made with insistent monotony, and despite the furious denunciations of sin in their sermons (for that, after all, was what sermons were for), this remained a society but half reformed.

And that, perhaps, was all for the best. For instead of the theocracy that might have reflected the strictest interpretation of the Genevan way, the Reformed Church remained a national church, ministering to a far larger number than the small cadre who willingly submitted themselves to the full church discipline. These *lidmaten*, full members of the church, coexisted in the congregation with a far larger number who attended services more or less regularly and supported the church with their donations; who respected the appointed ministers as persons of stature in the community, and appreciated their sermons; and who brought up their children in a god-fearing way. It was this broad, inclusive Calvinism that most properly reflected the spirit of the Dutch Republic and the legacy of the Revolt.

It also created a wide and inclusive market for the literature of devotion. This took many forms: the psalm books and New Testaments that the congregation carried with them to church; the catechisms that they bought for their children, and consulted themselves as a convenient handbook of the faith; the family Bible in which they recorded births, deaths and other milestones, and which was passed down through the generations. This already created an immense market for religious publishing in the vernacular. But what will surprise us most in this investigation is a wide and varied market of other types of devotional literature, bought not for any formal role in the worship regime, but purely for pleasure, for contemplation and for continuous self-instruction. This was increasingly the heart of the marketplace of devotion.

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

The greatest prize of religious publishing was the Bible itself. Access to Scripture in the vernacular was in many respects the foundational principle of the Reformation, its potency enhanced by the Catholic authorities' hasty decision to cede this critical part of the Christian heritage to their opponents. In the case of the Netherlands the association between Protestantism and vernacular Scripture was quite literally sealed in blood. The translator of the first Dutch Bible in the Lutheran tradition, Jan van Liesvelt, was burned at the stake; the first printer to attempt an edition of the full Bible text during the Dutch Revolt, Jan Canin, barely escaped the same fate.⁸ Canin had published in 1571 an edition of the so-called Deux-Aes Bible, the first translation created specifically for the Dutch Calvinist movement (the name derives from a marginal note of Martin Luther, referring to a gambling game).⁹ This translation, that would become the most influential of the sixteenth century, had been crafted in Emden, the principal centre of Dutch exile publishing before the Revolt.¹⁰

Given this heritage, it was no surprise that new editions of the Bible text would be a high priority when the Revolt established a secure foothold in Holland. In March 1579, the Delft publisher Albrecht Hendricksz requested and received a privilege for a new edition of the Deux-Aes Bible, issued later that year with a grand title-page that incorporated a recut version of the emblem used by the Reformed publishers of Emden.¹¹ Hendricksz, like Jan Canin, had impeccable Calvinist credentials, having married the widow of Harman Schinckel, executed in 1568 for publishing Reformed literature. But his initiative touched a raw nerve with Canin, now re-established at

Dordrecht, who two months later also applied for a privilege to publish the Bible. This too was granted, and the following day a separate Dordrecht/Delft consortium received a third privilege, this time for a translation of the Geneva Bible. This was fast becoming a free-for-all, an impression compounded by new editions of the venerable Liesvelt Bible at Rotterdam, and of the Deux-Aes and Liesvelt Bibles by Cornelis Claesz at Amsterdam. Demand was clearly robust, but as the new Republic took shape, the church had to decide whether this profusion of competing editions (to which could be added the Biestkens Bible favoured by Mennonites) truly served the church's purposes.¹²

This, like so much else, was taken in hand by the famous Synod of Dordt in 1618–1619. Shrugging aside the anger and anguish provoked by their firm resolution of the Remonstrant controversy, the synod decreed that the church should have a new translation of the Bible from the original Hebrew and Greek, to be undertaken by a dedicated team of experts under the patronage of the University of Leiden. The practical arrangements were delegated to the States General; inevitably so, as only they had the resources to finance such an undertaking. The regents asked that the churches of the participating experts should continue to pay their salaries while they were seconded to the Bible project; the States General, meanwhile, would underwrite all other costs, such as providing accommodation in Leiden, support staff and the purchase of any scholarly texts the translators might require. This financial support would amount to the considerable sum of 75,000 gulden over the duration of the project.

Even with the backing of both church and state, it would still be eighteen years from the decision to initiate the project to the appearance of the first printed editions. Only half of this time was accounted for by the work of translation. The numerous delays, awkward negotiations and outright duplicity that punctuated the road to completion emanated mostly from the publishing industry. The prestige of the project and the size of the potential profit meant that this was a market from which none of the Republic's major publishers could contemplate being excluded – at least not without a fight.

A first inkling of the problems ahead came soon after the synod's decision, when a deputation of printers entered a formal protest. It was all very well to promote a new translation, but, they argued, it should surely not go on sale until the publishers had had a chance to shift their stocks of editions that might soon be rendered redundant. They estimated this stock at a staggering 80,000 copies: a clear sign of the importance of the Bible market to the industry even at this stage.



25 A monument of scholarship and typography, the States Bible was swiftly established as one of the defining texts of the Dutch Republic.

In the event this was a problem that largely solved itself, as it would be 1625 before the translation work even got under way, and another eight years before the first drafts were ready to be inspected. Two teams were appointed, working respectively on the Old and New Testaments. This of course raised interesting questions of ownership when the translations wound their way to completion in the early 1630s. In the first years of the Reformation Martin Luther had never accepted a penny for the texts of his writings, from which Wittenberg's printers made such fortunes. His seventeenth-century Dutch heirs were not so reticent. Neither the church nor the civil authorities were prepared to risk a repetition of the free-for-all of the sixteenth century. The controversial solution was to vest the publication rights with the translators, who could then transfer these rights to the publisher of their choice. The publishing fraternity were appalled. They had no wish to pay the translators for the privilege of publishing God's word, and

negotiations stalled. To unblock the impasse, the burgomasters of Leiden suggested they should negotiate on the translators' behalf. What they did not reveal was that they had already concluded a secret deal with the States printer in The Hague, Machteld van Wouw, the widow of Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw. So long as she agreed to have the printing done in Leiden, she would have exclusive rights to publish the new States Bible in folio, quarto and octavo formats. The widow acted swiftly, bypassing the established Leiden printers and instead contracting the experienced devotional publisher Paulus Aertsz van Ravesteyn to move his shop from Amsterdam to take on the work. The satisfied burgomasters bought out the translators with generous cash payments, 1,500 gulden for each translator of the Old Testament and 1,200 for the much shorter New Testament.

The widow Van Wouw had secured a great prize, but at the cost of alienating the publishing establishment of both Leiden and Amsterdam. The jilted Leiden publishers made life as difficult as possible for the unfortunate Van Ravesteyn, refusing to help him with either supplies of paper or the many additional fonts of type he would need for this grand and complex project. The Amsterdam publishers simply refused to accept the outcome of the negotiations. They openly defied the widow's privilege, publishing their own version of the new text with their own annotations. The widow sued, but the courts, as so often when the major cities were set against each other, declined to hand down a definitive judgement.

The truth was that there were some monopolies so lucrative that it went against all sense of fair play, and ultimately undermined the long-term health of the industry, to have one publisher enjoy all the profits. A sly attempt to corral the market for almanacs in Antwerp in 1626 and 1630 had provoked a similar rebellion: in each case the privilege was revoked before the end of the year.¹³ With Amsterdam in open revolt and the magistrates divided, the privilege for the States Bible seemed destined to go the same way. The widow Van Wouw offered a compromise. She would allow other printers to print the States Bible, and waive her privilege, so long as her exclusive right to print the regal folio edition was respected. Amsterdam refused to bend: there was an important point of principle at stake here. Leiden was the nation's first university town, and *de facto* its leading intellectual centre. But Amsterdam was the motor of the economy, and fast emerging as the northern powerhouse of the European book trade. Amsterdam could not challenge Leiden's intellectual pre-eminence, but its book men would not allow themselves to be dealt out of the new state's most prestigious publishing project.

By now it was not even certain that there were profits to be made: Van Ravesteyn's first official edition had appeared in 1637 and was selling well, helped by bulk sales to the provincial governments keen to see the folio Bible installed in all parish churches. The States of Groningen was the first to react, purchasing two copies for each church already in 1637.¹⁴ So it was by no means clear, with this official market already catered for, that another lavish folio would sell. Indeed, Pieter Rammazeyn, a Gouda publisher who overstretched his finances when attempting to publish a folio edition of the States Bible in the 1640s, would be forced to shut his doors. The Amsterdam publishers sensibly formed a consortium to spread the risk of their determination to challenge the widow's monopoly. By 1641 the Amsterdam newspapers were defiantly advertising the consortium folio as fully in accordance with the Synod of Dordt and printed with the approval of the magistrates of Amsterdam.¹⁵

In the next ten years both Leiden and Amsterdam editions would find their market, not least because customers took to the new Bible immediately, despite the reluctance of some synods to enforce purchase. The States Bible was also, somewhat unexpectedly, swiftly adopted by both Remonstrants and Mennonites: this was truly a national project, and a fitting symbol of its distinct nationhood.

The real size of this market is not easy to fathom. In the fifteen years after the first edition of the States Bible, Dutch printers published at least twenty-four further reprints of the folio. Only nine of these can be attributed to Van Ravesteyn and the widow Van Wouw, an astonishing tribute to the power of the industry to subvert regulations generally thought to be oppressive and unfair. When the widow's privilege expired in 1652 it was not renewed; it had, in any case, long been a dead letter. But Van Wouw could hardly complain. Buoyed by the steady work involved in her appointment as States printer, by 1654 her wealth was assessed at 225,000 gulden. When she died in 1661 she was one of the richest inhabitants of The Hague. Her printer, Van Ravesteyn, also flourished. At the time of his death in 1662, an inventory of his possessions revealed that he had in stock no fewer than 10,145 copies of the complete Bible, and 17,940 copies of the New Testament.

This was an impressive demonstration of what was an enormous business, but the real story embedded in this careful listing of the stock lies elsewhere. The Ravesteyn inventory listed five versions of the privileged folio Bible, a luxury Royal format on fine paper from the Veluwe in Gelderland and four smaller, cheaper settings. The octavo edition covered by the privilege was also there, in a smaller typeface, and with or without the Apocrypha.

A set of maps to insert in the folio editions could be bought separately. Van Ravesteyn had also developed an impressive range of Bible editions not envisaged by the original privilege: Bibles and New Testaments in duodecimo, with or without the Psalms, and tiny editions in 24mo, 32mo and 48mo. Some had cognate editions in French translation. There were editions with especially large margins for note-taking, and also bilingual French/Dutch editions. All told, the inventory lists forty separate editions, formats and arrangements of the Bible, the New Testament and the Psalms. And remember, this represents only the editions still in stock in 1662; no doubt many others had been published and sold.

This is one of the most important and lucrative parts of the Dutch book market, but it is also one of the most difficult to reconstruct. The folio Bibles survive well, as one might expect; but the smaller formats were meant not to grace the shelves of a library but for everyday use. These have not survived well. When libraries have copies of the smaller formats they are not always accurately described in their catalogues: even for an experienced cataloguer it is not always easy to distinguish between 12mo, 24mo and 48mo, 16mo and 32mo. But this market was clearly massive. To confirm this, we have only to page through the publishers' advertisements in the surviving copies of the Amsterdam newspapers, a large number of which are for new editions of the Bible text. Thus in short order in 1643 the Amsterdam consortium brought to the market a New Testament in large octavo, 'according to the new translation, with notes accompanying the psalms, and the psalms also in the margins'; and another in 24mo, with the psalms and songs along with musical notation. In the same newspaper issue Van Ravesteyn, not to be outdone, offered a separate edition of the Psalms, along with the catechism, in a tiny 48mo.¹⁶

What is so useful in these advertisements is the brief prose commentary, stressing the novel features of the new editions. In 1648 the Rotterdam bookseller Matthias Wagens offered yet another version of the psalms, 'according to the new translation of the Bible, containing the same number of verses as the French psalms and those of Petrus Dathenus, and most convenient to use in the Reformed Church, with privilege'.¹⁷ In 1650 Cornelis de Leeuw could offer his customers 'One hundred and fifty Psalms of David, with all the *Lof-sangen* on music notes, corrected of all misprints (which are to be found even in the best editions), and with a new key, the same always used in Reformed Church services, which allows one to learn the psalms with great ease. Most convenient to use in church, available in 4o and 32mo'.¹⁸ De Leeuw was a specialist music printer, and the sale of psalm

books with musical notation was an important part of his business. Three years later he could go one better. Now he had on sale a copy of the psalms in small 24mo '(instead of 32mo, the 24mo providing a more suitable format and set with a better typeface), with music notes and a short introduction which allows one to sing the psalms with little effort; also available in 4o; 8o; 12mo; large 24mo; and 16mo': in all, six different formats.¹⁹

Bibles and psalm books in all sizes, for all occasions and all pockets. Already in 1582 the church council of Dordrecht noted that 'the common man . . . will often have four, five or more psalm books in his house.'²⁰ The newspaper advertisements bring home to us that the health of this market depended on making sales to customers who already had a Bible and psalm book at home, persuading them that these should augment this collection with others to take to church, for convenient consultation while travelling or to give to their sons and daughters. We know that this marketing was successful, not least because Reformed clergy sometimes criticised the prideful display of beautifully bound Bibles in the hands of the young offspring of the city bourgeoisie. Thus Franciscus Ridderus:

Books, like the Bible, do little good when they are not opened. . . . I cannot complain of the binding of Bibles: such splendour is appropriate, if it was only motivated by love and honour of God's Word: but some children seem to do so only to carry the Bible or a little Testament to church. The greatest honour is that one should read books, and thereby make use of them.²¹

This seems unduly harsh. The New Testament or psalm book clasped in these young hands, was not just wanton display, but a rite of passage, a sign of the reading skills that signalled growing maturity. The practice of carrying books to church was clearly so ubiquitous that even some adults who could not read supplied themselves with a book to disguise their ignorance, though this could backfire badly, as in the case of a woman whose neighbour noticed that her open psalm book was upside down.²²

In a society that believed that the display of wealth should be carefully measured, decorative binding of church books was generally accepted; and those of us studying these publications have reasons to be grateful that this was so. In addition to auction catalogues, we can glean a large amount of information about book collections from the inventories made of people's possessions after they died, but these only list books separately if they are of some value. Small and inexpensive books like psalm collections would



26 In this stiff but moving portrait of a young girl on the verge of adulthood, the richly decorated church book signals both her piety and her social status.

probably have been passed over in silence, but for their precious bindings. But thanks to these honourable accoutrements, we know that Anna van Damme, wife of Andries van der Hoeff, had ‘two testaments with silver clasps, a bible with silver adornments and clasps, an evening-book [*Avondmaalsboekje*, for evening prayers] with silver corners and a psalm book with silver clasps’. This was a Leiden matron not ashamed to flaunt her wealth in the service of the Lord.²³

These sorts of vignettes add precious layers of meaning to our understanding of this enormous, complex and lucrative market. We would certainly not find it easy to reconstruct this wild profusion of church books if we relied only on the catalogues of the world’s great libraries, for libraries, for understandable reasons, have collected the larger, scholarly editions, rather than those published for carrying about and daily study. To confirm their existence we have to scrutinise these newspaper advertisements, inventories and the catalogues of publishers’ stock. Taking the temperature of Dutch

religious culture relies in large measure on this patient reconstruction of a lost world of worship and devotion.

THE PIOUS BESTSELLER

We enter this lost world again when we turn from the market for biblical texts to devotional literature. The Dutch Reformed Church spawned a very considerable literature of religious devotion, books of comfort and exhortation every bit as important as the better-known contributions to religious controversy. This was a lively market from the first years of the Republic, but the publication of the States Bible stimulated a rush of new editions, since all the old favourites had to be revised and updated so that their biblical citations conformed to the new translation.

All of this made work for the publishers, and yet only a small proportion of these editions can today be located in libraries. Take this one advertisement, placed by the publisher Marten Jansz Brandt in 1643:

For sale, with Marten Jansz Brandt in Amsterdam, by D. Roelof Pietersz, 1. *Het Lof Jesu Christi onses Heeren* [The Ode to Jesus Christ our Lord], already published in 1643. 2. *Het Lof der Kercke Jesu Christi* [The Ode to the Church of Jesus Christ], already published in 1643. 3. *t Lof des Woordts Godts, ofte der H. Schrifture* [The Ode to the Word of God, or the Holy Scripture], [already published in] 1640. 4. *Scherme ende Schilt der Kinderen Godes* [Guard and Shield of the Children of God], an explanation of psalm 91. 5. *De Spiegel der Barmhertigheyt en Gerechtigheyt Gods* [The Mirror of Compassion and Righteousness of God]. 6. *De Enge Poorte, ofte de Wegh der Saligheyt* [The Narrow Gate, or the Road to Salvation]. 7. *Eenige Korte Gulden Regelen eenes Heyligen Levens* [A Brief Golden Rule for a Holy Life]. 8. *Den Evangelischen Arendt* [The Evangelical Eagle]. All enlarged and reviewed, and improved according to the new translation of the Bible.²⁴

The concluding note, that these new editions had all been ‘enlarged and reviewed, and improved according to the new translation of the Bible’, was a constant refrain in advertisements between 1637 and 1655, a reminder that owners of these popular texts should really replace their existing copies. No-one benefited more from this restocking of citizen libraries than Marten Jansz Brandt, the most important orthodox devotional publisher in the first half of the seventeenth century. More than 360 works are known to have been published by him – many are known only through advertisements. Brandt

worked closely with a number of printers, most notably Paulus Aertsz van Ravesteyn and Dominicus van der Stichel, and Contra-Remonstrant authors. These included Jacob Trigland, Willem Teellinck, Ewout Teellinck, Roelof Pietersz, Frans Esausz den Heussen, Jacobus Hollebeek and Vincent van Drielenburch. This was effectively a roll call of the hardliners of the first generation of Contra-Remonstrants.

Brandt began his career with the publication of highly polemical Contra-Remonstrant tracts, playing a prominent role in the pamphleteering crisis of the later 1610s, and celebrating the demise of the Remonstrants in the early 1620s.²⁵ From the later 1620s he developed a business model based almost entirely on the publication of popular orthodox devotional tracts and school books. Brandt's titles were beautifully produced, with a mixture of black letter and roman typefaces, often set in two columns for easy reading. These were quality books, reflecting the dignity of their contents, but still relatively cheap. Soon Brandt had a stock list of bestselling titles such as *Salomons Sweerdt* (*Solomon's Sword*), a tract by Bouritius Sibema offering a step-by-step refutation of Remonstrant ideology; or Jacobus Hollebeek's *De Geestelycke Krijghsman* (*The Spiritual Warrior*), offering the devout reader a spiritual defence against all defiling creeds and sects. These titles reflected one of the core messages of the Reformation: read for yourself, and enlighten yourself with pious arguments and justifications for your faith, defend yourself against the corrupting lies of false prophets and heretics. The engraved title-page of the *Krijghsman* featured a fully armoured soldier striking down papists, drunks and devils.

Brandt was not one of Amsterdam's wealthiest publishers, partly because he invested most of his profits back into the business. Even so, his widow's capital was valued at 23,500 gulden by 1674. Although this was not the case with many printers, Brandt was committed to the cause he served. Even after the shift in power in Amsterdam in the early 1620s, which installed the 'libertine' faction more sympathetic to Remonstrants, Brandt refused to trim his sails. He remained a steadfast supporter of the local Amsterdam preachers, especially Jacob Trigland, who preached vehemently against the change of course in the Amsterdam magistracy in the 1620s. Supporters of the magistrates sneeringly referred to Trigland as 'the bishop of Amsterdam', but his criticisms hit home, and Brandt stood ready to put them into print. No less a figure than Vondel identified Brandt as the chief proponent of orthodox Calvinism. In 1628 Brandt defiantly reprinted a placard of the States General against Remonstrants, highlighting the transgressions of the Amsterdam magistracy.²⁶

Brandt knew his market. In the *Courante uyt Italien* of 1643 he was advertising books he knew would sell. He had published Pietersz's *Scherme ende Schilt der Kinderen Godes* already in 1631 and 1636, and would do so again in 1644. *De Spiegel der Barmhertigheyt en Gerechtigheyt Gods* was published in 1628, 1632, 1640 and 1644, in addition to the 1643 edition. For *Eenige Korte Gulden Regelen eenes Heyligen Levens* there are editions recorded for 1632, 1634, 1638 and 1641, all by Brandt. *Den Evangelischen Arendt* he published in 1637, 1639 and 1646.²⁷

Interestingly, none of the eight editions advertised in 1643 can be linked to a surviving edition. It is clear that what survives, and can today be tracked down in a library, may be only the tip of the iceberg. We can see that Roelof Pietersz's *Het Lof Jesu Christi onses Heeren* is described as the second edition published in this same year, 1643. In the case of the *De Enge Poorte, ofte de Wegh der Saligheyt*, Brandt would republish this again in 1646, where it is described as the seventh edition. None of the previous editions have yet been traced.

Here then is a mass of popular devotional literature, published and republished up to three times a year, and extremely poorly represented in surviving copies. Where editions do survive this is very often in a single copy in the library of the Free University in Amsterdam; others survive exclusively in private collections.²⁸ We have reason to be grateful to these pious collectors, because most book collectors would show scarcely a flicker of interest if items like this were to come on the market. The texts, though neat enough, have none of the obvious attributes of collectability; they also generally do not command a sufficient price to register in seventeenth-century auction catalogues. But contemporary publishers and booksellers realised their value, for the Dutch Republic was, in the trade in books as in that of many other commodities, an economy that flourished through the realisation of a large volume of business with small margins. And with these small devotional texts the Dutch publishing world reached down into the realm of careful householders for whom the purchase of a book was a considered expense weighed against other small domestic luxuries; and perhaps not in this case even such a luxury, with Roelof Pietersz's inspiring promise of salvation in the hereafter.

BORROWED PLUMES

One segment of this market requires particular comment, the trade in Dutch translations of English theological writers. Works by English authors

had not to this point made a major impact on the continental book markets. Most authors who became well known abroad, did so, like John Fisher and Sir Thomas More, in the controversies of the Reformation era, through the circulation of their works in Latin. But in the seventeenth century the Dutch developed an extraordinary liking for the works of English theologians, which circulated in the Dutch Republic both in Latin and in an ever-increasing number of Dutch translations. Some Dutch ministers even began to collect the English originals. The popularity of Anglophone devotional writing persisted even when the political relationship between the two nations became particularly fractious (a friction exacerbated, it must be said, by the increasingly confident Dutch infiltration of the English book market).

In the first decades of the seventeenth century, this vogue for English translations was dominated by the works of English puritan writers. The Dutch puritan connection began, on the English side, with William Perkins, and on the Dutch with a close-knit circle of theologians and translators located in Zeeland. Here, on the windswept North Sea coast, small communities wrestled a living from the sea, fully aware of the existential danger to life and livelihood posed by the vagaries of wind and tide. Here were pious men and women unbendingly committed to Calvinist orthodoxy: the intellectualism of the Holland Remonstrants largely passed Zeeland by. There were also, through the ports of Middelburg, Veere, Vlissingen and Zierikzee, close and familiar connections with England. These connections played an important role in facilitating the translation of English texts, since English was a language otherwise not widely known on the continent. Several of those who would translate English devotional texts had previously served in the Dutch exile congregations in London, Kent or East Anglia.²⁹

The works of William Perkins were popularised in the Dutch Republic largely through the efforts of two colleagues in the ministry at Middelburg, Godfridus Cornelisz Udemans and Willem Teellinck. Udemans founded his unbending Contra-Remonstrant view of the Sabbath on a reading of Perkins, and Teellinck was the guiding force behind the Perkins translations. Here he worked closely with the translator Vincent Meusevoet, who between 1600 and 1620 rendered into Dutch thirty of Perkins' works. Since Perkins had died in 1602, the overwhelming proportion of these translations were posthumous, and these editions would continue to be reissued into the 1650s and beyond.

Teellinck and his colleagues knew that they were promoting a particular brand of English spirituality: significantly, it is about this time that the

word *puritan* (*puritein*) entered the Dutch language.³⁰ But the English puritans could not claim an exclusive hold on the Dutch market. The single most popular translated text, with no fewer than fifty-one editions published in Dutch between 1620 and 1688, was *The Practice of Piety*, an international bestseller written by the Bishop of Bangor, Lewis Bayly. Bayly's position within the established church did not seem to have damaged him with a Dutch Calvinist audience (and perhaps they did not realise that parts of his text were drawn from pre-Reformation Catholic spiritual writings). Collectively, Dutch customers purchased more than 100,000 copies of the work.³¹ A decision by the VOC Council in 1654, that copies of *The Practice of Piety* should be provided for both the captain and *sieken-trooster* of outgoing ships, was probably the regularisation of an existing practice.

Bayly's book would only be dropped from the list of prescribed ship-board reading in the year 1790, at the height of the agitation stimulated by the French Revolution. In the seventeenth century, Bayly's classic provided work for publishers throughout the Netherlands, in Amsterdam, Groningen, Leeuwarden, Utrecht, Delft, The Hague, Dordrecht and Middelburg: not least through the dozen or more editions published in English for sly re-export back to Bayly's homeland. According to an account given to the Leiden magistrates by Matthew Simmons, an English printer settled in Leiden, Johannes Janssonius of Amsterdam was printing *The Practice of Piety* in editions of 10,000 copies. This was an extremely large print run by the standards of the time, but Simmons, who provided a detailed account of the workings of the English export market, was a reliable witness.³²

Overall, during the course of the century, something over six hundred texts were published in Dutch from English originals.³³ Over 80 per cent of these were religious works: the penchant for English poetry or drama exhibited by the statesman-poet Constantijn Huygens was very much a minority taste. This rummaging through the wardrobe of English divinity did not go uncriticised. Even some of those involved in the translation programme were no great admirers of the English language. There was general agreement, as Johannes Ubelman, erstwhile Dutch minister in Yarmouth, Suffolk, put it, that English was a language 'botched together from all the languages of Europe'.³⁴ Some feared that easy access to these English works would stifle the creativity of Dutch authors. True it is, acknowledged Petrus de Lange,

that among all theologians the English excel in working out their sermons in an extraordinary way (concerning the practice of piety), yet, even

without them ever coming to our soil, the minds of the Dutch are powerful and sharp enough too to present such sermons and writings to their fellow people.

It rather weakened his argument that these sentiments appeared in his preface to a collection of the writings of the English divine Christopher Love, partly translated by De Lange himself.³⁵ On the English side, some fretted that the original English authors received so little credit for their work. Bishop Thomas Sprat, writing when relations between the countries had been poisoned by war, saw this as just one more example of sharp Dutch business practice.

Our famous Divines have been innumerable, as the Dutch men may witness, who, in some of their Theological Treatises, have been as bold with the English sermons, as with our fishing; and their robberies have been so manifest, that our church ought to have reprisals against [them], as well [as] our merchants.³⁶

In fairness it should be noted that little of this benefit went to the hard-working translators. They were seldom paid for their effort: as ever, the profit went to the publishers.

In the first decades of the seventeenth century these English writings filled a gap while Dutch ministers were penning the necessary foundational texts for the church and then, less creditably, engaged in vituperative bouts of mutual polemic. Yet by mid-century the churches were fully established, and the polemical fury somewhat abated: yet still the English translations kept coming. This requires some explanation. It owes something to the profusion of new texts available, stimulated by the English Civil War and England's own experiment with republicanism. English devotional writings were clearly selling well, and it would have gone against the grain for Dutch publishers to abandon a profitable venture before the seam was fully worked out. Added to this was a strong feeling that, despite the Contra-Remonstrant triumph at the Synod of Dordt, the orthodox could not afford to rest on their laurels. After lying low for some years, by the 1630s the Amsterdam council was once more in the hands of those who had little sympathy for the Contra-Remonstrant agenda; worse, the death of Stadhouder William II of Orange in 1650 and the subsequent ascendancy of Johan de Witt's True Freedom seemed to promise a long winter when orthodox priorities would be ignored.³⁷ The publication of puritan devotional writings became a

key aspect of the Reformed Church's intellectual resistance to the De Witt regime, and the consolations of what was, in some respects, a form of internal exile. If the Reformed ministers were no longer especially influential in the inner councils of state, they could at least reinforce their ascendancy over the Calvinist mind, and encourage a religion of reflection and reinforcement in Calvinist households.

These two factors, a rush of available texts and a progressive sense of political alienation, led to a new spate of English translations, peaking in 1655 and sustained through the rest of the decade. After 1660, with the restoration of the monarchy in England, the supply of new English texts diminished, and publishers and translators were obliged to reach deeper into the back catalogue of favoured authors. It is characteristic of this literature that many English texts were first rendered into Dutch twenty, thirty or even forty years after their first publication. This should not surprise us. In contrast to many of the popular genres that sustained Dutch presses, such as news books, almanacs, religious or political controversy, devotional literature was not particularly time-sensitive. The call to repentance, to deal justly with neighbours, the need for meditative prayer, to give thanks for good fortune and to have the Lord's merciful kindness were ever in mind: these were the themes that helped re-anchor the Christian life after the furious activity of the working day. With the help of the Bible, the psalms and devotional literature, the home became both church and sanctuary. This was also a form of literature that easily crossed devotional boundaries. One did not have to be reminded of the enduring popularity of the *Imitation of Christ*, the work of the fifteenth-century Catholic mystic Thomas à Kempis, or indeed Lewis Bayly's shameless borrowing from similar texts, to realise that the English works, unhitched from their original puritan context, could make their way easily into the homes of Lutherans, Mennonites or even the despised Remonstrants.

In the last three decades of the century, the passion for English devotional texts abated. The one major exception was the enthusiastic Dutch adoption of John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The first Dutch edition followed soon after the English, in 1682; there would be a further sixteen printings before the end of the century.³⁸ A French translation was also published in Amsterdam in 1685. The rage for Bunyan stimulated the translation of four more of his texts, including his moving spiritual autobiography, *Grace Abounding*. Bunyan was an unrepentant puritan, though even here there is a neat connection with the wider streams of devotional literature. One of the two books that Bunyan's wife brought to the marital home was Lewis Bayly's

The Practice of Piety. Bunyan read it, and it had a profound influence in shaping the *Pilgrim's Progress*. Devotional literature recognised no barriers of place, language or denomination. Its remarkable and persistent popularity in the Dutch Republic tells us every bit as much about the character of Dutch religious life as the furious polemic of its feuding professors.

DR BOUMA'S SIN OF PRIDE

We have left until last one other major source of limitless work for the Dutch print industry, the catechism, Protestantism's most original contribution to Christian pedagogy. The catechism played a remarkable role in the Protestant movement, not least because it defied all expectations of a trend towards didactic uniformity. Here, as in so much, Luther led the way. Although he provided his own church with both a long and short catechism, carefully measured for different levels of understanding, Luther would positively encourage diversity. His own catechisms, though vastly influential, were never prescriptive. Luther encouraged other early supporters of the evangelical movement to try their hands as writers of catechisms, and many obliged.

This set the tone for most of the major Protestant churches. In England, a huge number of clergymen wrote catechisms – several hundred can be identified today, alongside a mass of anonymous works.³⁹ The first century of Dutch Protestantism was similarly fertile for the promotion of catechising, with many different texts published in Emden and other exile centres, and transplanted back into rebel territory in the last decades of the sixteenth century.⁴⁰

The catechism was such fertile territory for authors and publishers alike because of its enormous versatility as a devotional and pedagogic tool. Catechism was taught in the school, at home, in church, and even on VOC ships. Ministers used catechisms as a means to arm themselves for the struggle against dissidence in their congregations; private citizens read them for pleasure, or to still a troubled soul or conscience. In this diversity of purpose lay the root of multiplicity. All catechisms taught the essentials of faith in a series of questions and answers. But from thereon the scope for elaboration was enormous. Catechisms could be nothing more than a brief recapitulation of the principal heads of belief. Or they could be long, complex documents, in effect an encyclopaedia of Protestant dogma.

The world's libraries hold many hundreds of these catechisms, but their rarity (many survive in only one single copy), suggests that many others have been lost altogether. This should not surprise us. One can hardly blame



27 This popular catechism by Franciscus Ridderus laid out the obligations of the pious household, where prayer and devotional reading were essential parts of the daily routine.

the schoolchild for taking the first opportunity to jettison their copy, an unprized possession that brought back many unwelcome memories of impatient scolding parents and the schoolmaster's whip. Even the most dedicated Christian autodidact was likely to need to replace their copy, as it became thumbled and tatty from overuse. So this is one genre of Christian pedagogy where we have little hope of recreating the original corpus published merely from listing copies found in public collections.

How then can we recover this lost literature of devotion and Christian instruction? Advertisements in the Amsterdam newspapers offer a first selection of precious references, which we can compare to surviving editions, but for the 1640s we also have one additional exceptional source, the *Catalogus Universalis* of Broer Jansz. The *Catalogus Universalis* was an attempt to rival the famous Frankfurt Fair catalogue, by listing all recent books published in the Dutch Republic, and Broer Jansz sustained it for just over a decade between 1640 and 1651.⁴¹ We have met Broer Jansz already, witnessing the execution of Oldenbarnevelt and as the proprietor of one of the first newspapers. Even before this Jansz had been a diligent publisher of news pamphlets.

The success of his newspaper and pamphlets allowed him to branch out. He had seen how his newspaper had given him access to a national market – publishers from all over the Republic would place their advertisements in his newspapers, secure in the knowledge that their local clients would be among the Amsterdam newspapers' subscribers. Using his newspaper, Broer Jansz solicited all booksellers in the Dutch Republic to send him the titles of their latest publications, for inclusion in the *Catalogus*. Judging by the surviving issues of the catalogue, many heeded his call. We can compare all of this data, not only with surviving copies, but with the catalogues of stock issued periodically by the major publishing houses.

Let us experiment with how this data can be exploited, and conclude our analysis of this vital, buoyant and scarcely visible segment of the Dutch print world by looking in more detail at one such invisible bestseller: the catechism of Dr Gellius de Bouma (1579–1658). Bouma was not one of the titans of the existential conflict that pitched the followers of Professor Gomarus against Professor Arminius and the Remonstrants. Bouma spent most of his career away from the epicentre of the conflict as a minister in Zutphen, on the border between Gelderland and Overijssel. Early in his working life, in common with so many Protestant ministers, he began work on a catechism. He sensibly suspended writing while he awaited the definitive resolution of the Remonstrant controversy at the Synod of Dordt, before resuming; the resulting work was published for the first time in 1621.

What Bouma unveiled to the reading public in 1621 was a very considerable work: a densely argued devotional primer of some hundreds of pages, arranged as 129 questions, divided between the 52 weeks of the year. Each week begins with one or more questions taken from the Heidelberg catechism. But before moving on, Bouma offers a sequence of subsidiary questions and answers, expounding on the principles expressed in the initial answer. This leads the reader deep into the theological heart of the question; it also provides the schoolmaster, pastor or harassed parent with a battery of responses to questions posed by the more acute of their pupils – for if the Dutch had placed the Christian household at the heart of devotional life, this was also the anticipated location for catechising.

The earliest surviving edition contains a preface to the States and councillors of Gelderland, dated 18 September 1621.⁴² One can presume that this is the preface to the oldest (now lost) edition of 1621. In the preface Bouma highlights the importance of catechising, not only for children but also to convert papists and other heretics. He draws on biblical examples of the necessity of understanding the Scripture and the nature of God. He praises the

church fathers of the Palatinate for composing and publishing the Heidelberg catechism in 1609. This dedicatory letter to his employers is followed by a preface to the reader, in which Bouma sketches the contents of the catechism. This is aimed more at teachers than at children; it urges discretion and caution in the instruction of the young, and in the interpretation of Scripture.

A second edition was not required before 1625, but at this point Bouma began to develop more of a following; by the 1640s, the highpoint of the new state's economic growth and a hugely successful decade for the book industry, Bouma's catechism had become a runaway bestseller and the leading title on the market. The author continued to adjust and expand his text: by his last years this had become a somewhat bloated text of over six hundred pages. The publishers also invested in a series of engraved title-pages: the Lootsman Amsterdam edition of 1647, an octavo of four hundred pages, has a touching engraving of the Christian family gathered at table, a table empty of food but covered in books, the true sustenance for the soul.

Through all of this success, both personal and for the Dutch Republic, Bouma offered an inspiring vision of pious rectitude; but he was not, for all that, oblivious to the joys of authorial success. For the edition of 1647 the author composed a new preface, sketching the history of its composition, and relating how, as publishers became aware of its popularity, he was inundated with requests from booksellers asking him to update his work to take into account the new official translation of the Bible – the same *Statenbijbel* that had created new opportunities for Marten Jansz Brandt and Roelof Pietersz.⁴³ Yet if we were to judge by surviving copies alone, this air of self-congratulation seems somewhat misplaced: Dutch libraries list only six editions published before this edition of 1647, a respectable total, but hardly overwhelming.⁴⁴

Was Dr Bouma here guilty of the sin of pride, interpreting a modest recurring demand for his text as something more? As it turns out, this would do the proud author an injustice; for when we begin to chase down references in other sources, the picture changes dramatically. It just so happens that in precisely this period the documentary literature available is particularly abundant. The Amsterdam newspapers survive in a decent run; Bouma's text is large enough to merit listing in auction catalogues as a separate lot; and the stock catalogue of Hendrick Laurensz, published on his death in 1649, the height of the Bouma vogue, lists numerous editions.⁴⁵ We also find the catechism advertised almost every year in Broer Jansz's *Catalogus Universalis*. And as we delve into all of these sources, we gradually develop a wholly different perspective on Bouma's impact on the market.

The Amsterdam newspapers, for instance, advertise at least five new editions of Bouma's catechism, published in octavo and duodecimo in Amsterdam and Utrecht: none of these correspond to the editions known from surviving copies. Harvesting the successive issues of the *Catalogus Universalis* gives us a total of eight references; three correspond to editions advertised in the newspapers, and two to surviving copies, but three are entirely new (editions from Amsterdam and Dordrecht). In the auction catalogue of the stock of the Amsterdam bookseller Hendrick Laurensz, issued in 1649, potential customers could find no fewer than seven different editions – three of these, including an edition published in Delft, do not correspond to any of our previous references. The stock catalogue of Johannes Janssonius in 1665 contains only three editions, but one of these is new also.

By the time we have incorporated all of this data we have twenty-six editions published before 1651, confirming the work's status as a national bestseller. In most years during the 1640s, there are two new editions, and three in 1647 and 1648. Two book catalogue references confirm Bouma's recollection of first publication in 1621, an edition which has yet to be located in a surviving copy. We also know that David Beck, the newspaper-reading schoolmaster from The Hague, read a copy of the 1621 Bouma edition.⁴⁶ In the following decades it would go on to be published in ten different cities, in four different provinces and in multiple formats.

Why does all this matter? It matters because the sort of books that were most intensively used by contemporaries were often the books that survive least well. A book like Bouma's catechism was used every day – that was the point – and constantly thumbed. It might never have found a safe haven on the shelves of a library, and might have been too tatty to be passed down the generations (by the time their parents died, children would most likely have had their own copy anyway). The books that survive best are those that do find their way into a library, often very quickly after publication, and they have survived the centuries in between often because they were not in fact much read. This is the strange paradox that confronts all those who look to books as a window on the soul of past societies.

Devotional texts, psalm books, Bibles and catechisms were particularly vulnerable because they were usually too large to be bound together in collections (which is why so many short pamphlets, rather counter-intuitively, have survived well). Recovering the devotional world of these ordinary men and women in the pew requires rather more than simply relying on collective bibliographies of library stock – a search which will always privilege

big, expensive books which libraries cherish, over the small books that contemporaries read.

A LETTER FROM ALBANY

In June 1660, Jeremias van Rensselaer, like any dutiful son, wrote home to his mother, and he had good news to tell. After years of hesitation he had joined the Reformed Church, made his confession of faith and taken communion. He had also taught himself some of the psalms, which he intended to sing as pleasant diversion during the long winter nights.⁴⁷ This was all too necessary, for Jeremias was no ordinary young man making his way far from the comforts of home, but representative of the leading family of Beverwijck, now Albany in upper New York State, then the furthest settled outpost of Dutch civilisation on the Hudson River. When he arrived in Beverwijck, a lot lay on his young shoulders, and things did not go well. The Dutch lived on the sale of beaver pelts brought in to Beverwijck by Native American traders. Some years the pelts did not come. In 1659 his anxious mother wrote to ask whether his ill-fortune in business might have something to do with his failure to join the church. Whether it was this stern admonition or a developing relationship with a pious young lady of the community, Jeremias decided to join the church. His mother was asked to send a rhymed version of the psalms, like his uncle's, to help him learn more tunes. But he was still a Van Rensselaer. The same letter asked for a second psalm book, 'one of the thinnest and most oblong kind, to carry in the pocket' – and, more to the point, the right size to fit his golden clasps.

By this date Beverwijck was a community of some 120 households; behind New Amsterdam the second largest settlement in New Netherland.⁴⁸ Throughout the period of Dutch rule the colony had no printer, and Beverwijck, crammed with bakers, brewers and no fewer than eleven blacksmiths, had no bookseller. This deficiency was partly made good by Gysbert van Imborgh, the surgeon of Esopus, a smaller settlement halfway between Beverwijck and Manhattan. Van Imborgh, who doubled as a schoolmaster, kept a large stock of books, so large indeed that it cannot have been intended for his pupils alone. When the stock was auctioned after his death in 1674 it contained 110 ABC books and 100 catechisms. There were 83 copies of the history of Tobias and 23 of the history of Joseph, along with a range of other devotional texts.⁴⁹ All, of course, were supplied from the Dutch Republic.

Between November and March, when the Hudson was impassable, Beverwijck was essentially cut off from the outside world. Families huddled

in their homesteads and waited for the snow to melt. There was plenty of time for reading, devotional instruction and singing the psalms. It was in such times that the Dutch Church came closest to realising its ideal of the family as religious community. Included with Gysbert van Imborgh's stock were forty-eight copies of Jacobus Borstius's *Korte Begrijp der Christelijcke Leere* (*Brief Understanding of Christian Teachings*), a book designed for practising catechism at home. It comprised 71 questions about the Christian religion, and 158 about the Bible. First published in 1659, it would remain the text most used by Calvinist youth for 150 years. Winter was also the time for schooling. The schoolmaster in New Amstel (now Newcastle, Delaware) reported that 'as soon as winter begins and they can no longer work the soil, old and young will come to school and learn to read, write (and cipher)'.⁵⁰ These were rough, tough communities, but literacy levels would have been high: and devotional texts were at the core of the reading community.

Once the ice was melted, trading could resume. Two sloops made their way weekly to Beverwijck from Manhattan, carrying all the essentials of



28 This map has been beautifully designed to demonstrate that the Dutch, with Manhattan, have secured the vital entrance point to the American continent's vast interior, between the cul-de-sac of New England and the unhealthy swamps of Virginia. Unfortunately, the English seem to have studied the map and come to the same conclusion.

colonial life, in which we can include books. For the rest of his life Jeremias van Rensselaer relied on deliveries of new books from home, books which were then recycled through the community through auctions, as citizens died or returned to the Netherlands. Jeremias probably had one of the eight copies of Lewis Bayly's *Practice of Piety* in Dutch, sent by Killiaen van Rensselaer for the families of the colony in 1638. He may also have owned copies of the sermons of Abraham Scultetus sent by his father in 1632. In 1671 he asked his brother to send works by Caspar Sibelius, and the second volume of Adrianus Cocquius's *Theologia Praxis*. He had the first, and wanted to complete his set.

There is something very moving about this tiny community, 4,000 miles from Amsterdam, facing conditions unimaginable at home, still living out this perfect microcosm of Dutch religious life. Beverwijck, like New Amsterdam, would be undone by European geopolitics and in 1674 would be definitively ceded to the British. But the American Dutch were resilient and life went on, built round the church, the school and the homestead, the ceaseless round of prayer, catechism and singing the psalms. Even in 1797, as a new nation was born, a section of the Albany Dutch did not take it kindly when the church elders decided that henceforth preaching would be exclusively in English. They wrote a protest song; and so that everyone could sing along, they set it to the tune of a favourite psalm.⁵¹

We started this search for the texts that shaped Dutch religious culture rummaging in the hold of a VOC ship and ended on the frozen wastes of the Hudson River. But throughout this journey, the texts stay very much the same. Even on board ship the mess table replicated the learning community of the family, as sailors ate, slept and read together. It is little surprise to those who have progressed so far in this book that the Dutch could be this organised, but still striking how deeply the whole community was imbued with a religion of patient self-instruction. And this, through all the tribulations of the second half of the seventeenth century, would prove enduring. When Bouma's catechism was at the height of its popularity in the 1640s, the Dutch Republic also reached the peak of its most expansive phase of its booming economy. Four decades of rapid economic growth, and the long fight for security, had created a world empire and brought stability to its borders. In the 1650s and 1660s this success would come to seem like something of an illusion: the rising resentment of Dutch success and economic power led to a series of damaging conflicts, first with England, then, with almost catastrophic results, with Louis XIV. The Republic would weather

this storm; but both the conflict with England and the long engagement with France drew deep on the resources, even for a state as phenomenally wealthy (and well organised to raise taxation) as the Dutch state. It did not tip the Dutch into penury, and it did not end the Dutch Golden Age. But it did halt the momentum of seemingly inexorable economic growth, and this inevitably had implications for the book market.

The most visible part of the book market, certainly for jealous European neighbours, was the international trade. It was this that most provoked the French, especially in the 1640s, when the Elzevier classics enjoyed their greatest celebrity in Paris.⁵² But for all that the Dutch were beginning to apply to books the models of predatory capitalism that had served them so well in other aspects of international trade, the solid bedrock of the Dutch book economy remained the domestic market. This domestic trade was based on a number of key markets: work for state institutions, principally government bodies and the universities, small-format Latin classics, and the vernacular trade in Bibles and devotional literature, news and pamphlets. In the following chapters we will investigate these main pillars of the Dutch book trade, each very different from the devotional texts that have been our focus here. They do, however, share one characteristic: all these genres are hugely under-represented in the surviving copies today located in libraries. Here again, to understand this trade, we have to find ways to recover the lost books of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. Happily this search is both richly rewarding and deeply illuminating.

CHAPTER SIX



Schoolmaster Bartjens

IT WAS 1633, AND Gerrit Bartjens could have pulled his hair out. It was not easy to have a father as famous as his: Willem Bartjens, bestselling author and the most renowned schoolmaster in the country.¹ Gerrit, a bookseller in Zwolle, had taken it upon himself some time ago to publish his father's *Cijfferinghe*, a popular textbook offering a detailed introduction to arithmetic, featuring hundreds of examples of basic mathematical sums and more complex calculations of interest rates and currency exchange. It had gone through ten official printings since 1604, and demand was soaring. Unfortunately, Gerrit could tell this not by his profits but by the numerous unauthorised reprints of his father's book. Bartjens was worried: other editions not only cut into his profits, but the printers responsible for them devalued his father's reputation with their careless production standards.

Gerrit's solution was to reissue an enlarged, newly corrected edition of the *Cijfferinghe*, and to spend a considerable sum for the exclusive publication rights, buying an eleven-year privilege from the States General. He had even taken up an advertisement in the Amsterdam *Courante uyt Italien* to encourage sales. The book also contained a new preface by Willem, pleading with fellow schoolmasters not to buy any unlicensed edition.

It was all to no avail. Other publishers continued to reprint the book, paying no heed to Gerrit Bartjens' privilege. These leeches, like the Cloppenburghs in Amsterdam, flooded the market with cheap, low-quality editions. Some paid so little attention to the copying that they reproduced in full Willem Bartjens' preface from 1633 denouncing illicit editions.² Despite his fury, there was little Gerrit could do. He could appeal to the authorities in The Hague, or closer to home in his local Zwolle: the regents might prosecute the infringers, if Gerrit could point them out. But who could say that would scare off other rivals? In 1644, when the privilege on the *Cijfferinghe* expired, he did not bother to renew it. The family business was in decline. Yet Willem Bartjens' name would continue to accrue ever greater fame.

COUNTING MONEY

In 1591 Willem Bartjens, then a young man of 22, had opened a school in Amsterdam, where his specialism, arithmetic, was in great demand. Not every school offered mathematics, and the schoolmasters who did were not always well qualified to teach it. In the 1590s Amsterdam was booming: each week new families arrived from Germany, France and the Southern Netherlands to find their fortunes in the city on the IJ river. Many immigrants had left behind prosperous jobs and positions; here in their new home they wanted their children to succeed too. Many did so in the shipping trade, dealing in exports and imports, but also in the rapidly emerging financial market. In 1602 the main chamber of the VOC was established in Amsterdam, and seven years later a currency exchange was founded in the city hall. Merchants of all trades assembled daily at the Bourse: a sly and dangerous place, where one could be sold wind by unscrupulous brokers or make a killing dealing spices. In this fast new world, a good education was worth gold. Any decent merchant, broker or businessman would not only have to keep their books, but would have to solve complex sums in their head, sensing financial opportunities in the little discrepancies which sneaked in through currency exchanges, interest calculations and insurance contracts.

An education was not free. Parents were required to pay for the education of their children: rates depended on the type of school and the schoolmasters' talents, and at all schools learning mathematics was expensive, much more so than learning to read or write. But there were plenty of Amsterdam parents who would pay anything to see their children flourish. Willem Bartjens established his school in the Pijlsteeg, the narrow street leading from the Dam square to the local headquarters of the VOC. By all accounts he was a successful teacher. His school prospered and Bartjens mingled in the upper echelons of writers and artists assembled at a local rhetorician's chamber, where he became good friends with the Flemish painter Karel van Mander and a young Joost van den Vondel. It was in 1604, when Bartjens first published his *Cijfferinghe*, that he would enter the national consciousness.

Bartjens' *Cijfferinghe* was but one example of the flourishing trade in *cijfer-boecken* (literally, number books). These little textbooks, most small enough to fit comfortably in one's hand, had been used for over a century at Dutch schools to instruct pupils in the basic elements of arithmetic: addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.³ They introduced students to the properties of numbers, monetary values and weights, offering hundreds of sums for exercises. The practice sums listed in *cijfer-boecken* familiarised

pupils with mathematical problems they might encounter in daily life. And not just life at home. A great deal of their appeal is the way in which they summon up the world beyond, a world that the Dutch were taking by storm. What better way to grip a schoolboy's imagination, and persuade him of the necessity of mastering mathematics?

A pound of cheese costs 2 stuivers minus a duit [a quarter stuiver]. How much do 1,234 pounds of cheese cost?⁴

A and B journey from Harderwijk to Rome. A travels at a speed of seven miles a day, and B travels at a speed of ten miles a day. Both take the same route, but A has left six days before B. Question: in how many days will B meet A so that they can travel onwards in company?⁵

A warship is manned by 250 men, and has victuals for one year: after three months 50 men are transferred to another ship. Question: how much longer can the remaining men last with the same victuals?⁶

If 960 soldiers are besieged in a city, and they have provisions for five and $\frac{1}{3}$ months, but are forced to spend eight months under siege, how many soldiers are to be removed so that they can last the eight months with the allocated provisions?⁷

Cijfer-boecken were essential primers for those entering the world of business. The examples listed here give way to much more intricate sums from the complex world of finance. Although the primary market for *cijfer-boecken* was found in schools, merchants, accountants and shop owners also relied on *cijfer-boecken* as convenient handbooks.

Bartjens' *Cijfferinghe* was not the first *cijfer-boeck* to be published, but certainly the most famous. It became a national bestseller, remaining in print until the 1840s. That a mathematical textbook could retain its currency for almost two and a half centuries would seem extraordinary in any other context, but Bartjens was a national phenomenon. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the popular phrase 'according to Bartjens' meant using the basic rules of arithmetic, calculated as accurately as possible. Some eighteenth-century publishers of Bartjens had such faith in the accuracy of his calculations that they offered cash prizes to anyone who could find a mathematical error.⁸

Bartjens' *Cijfferinghe* was not mathematically superior to those written by other popular schoolmasters and accountants like David Cock van Enkhuizen, Sybrant Hansz Cardinael, Johan Coutereels, Herman Cornelis Mots and Daniel van Houcke. Many schoolmasters tried to publish their



29 One of the most successful of all mathematical primers. Here we have some of the more elementary examples, before Bartjens moves on to more testing calculations.

school books to bolster their reputation and supplement their income. In this they made a significant contribution to the book trade; but also in their role as sellers and distributors of school books. In the small Holland town of Weesp, Marten Huisman was both bookseller and the local schoolmaster.⁹ Many other schoolmasters had an engraver, publisher or printer in the family, and the two trades worked closely in tandem.

The trade in pedagogical literature was one of the most competitive of the book market. With so many *cijfer-boecken* available for sale – and many children requiring textbooks – the personal reputation of the author was critical to its success. A parent or schoolmaster walking into the bookshop of Hendrick Laurensz in Amsterdam in 1649 would find fourteen different *cijfer-boecken* for sale; in 1665 Johannes Janssonius had no fewer than twenty-one different editions available in his shop.

In his age Bartjens was adept at cultivating his name as a brand of quality, and it is this which led his *Cijfferinghe* to lasting fame. He attracted support from the magistrates of cities like Amsterdam and Zwolle, to whom he dedicated various editions of his work; his friends, Van Mander and Vondel, offered dedicatory verses for his book; and editions of the *Cijfferinghe* were adorned with a proud portrait engraving of the diligent schoolmaster himself.

In the autumn of 1648 the Amsterdam bookseller Johannes Sculperoort advertised in two newspapers for the sixth impression of a Dutch *cijfer-boeck* by Jean Raymaker.¹⁰ None of these six editions can be found today. Bartjens'

books, despite his formidable reputation, do not seem to have survived much better. We know of at least thirty-two editions printed before 1700, only seventeen of which have survived, virtually all in only a single, often battered copy, some annotated by their contemporary owners with copious calculations. The story of Bartjens' rivals is not much different. *Cijfer-boecken* were designed to be used to pieces, splotted by inky fingers and read in class till the sums became illegible. The few surviving copies provide a glimpse into an extremely profitable and highly ephemeral part of the book trade; and into the world of the reading public of the Dutch Republic, who would have taken their first steps into the Bourse, port or weighing house with Bartjens' sums reverberating in their minds.

SPANISH TYRANNY AT SCHOOL

A flourishing book trade requires literate customers. It was no coincidence that the Dutch Republic was, by the standards of its time, a highly literate society, with some of the highest literacy rates in the seventeenth century. By 1650 around two-thirds of men and one-third of women in Amsterdam could sign their name.¹¹ While one cannot assume that they all wrote frequently, or capably, one can presume that they must have had some level of literacy. Literacy rates in other cities in the country were not much different. They were assuredly a little lower in the countryside, but by the end of the century virtually all children in the Dutch Republic – boys and girls – could find a school within walking distance. In 1603 Joseph Justus Scaliger noted that 'in the Netherlands, peasant women and men, and almost all maid servants, are able to read and write'.¹² In his famous description of the Low Countries, first published in 1567, the Italian historian Lodovico Guicciardini remarked that:

The common folk usually have some understanding of grammar, and they are all, even the farmers and rural folk, at least able to read and write . . . There are many who are able to speak not only their mother tongue, but many foreign languages, even if they have never been abroad . . .¹³

We do not need to take these statements literally to grasp that there was something remarkable about the pedagogical culture of the Low Countries. This was, after all, the birthplace of Erasmus, the great humanist who had espoused at the start of the sixteenth century the ideals of a general education for all people. Across Europe, the scions of princes and nobles could undoubtedly

rely on a decent education, often provided at home by private tutors, consisting of instruction in classical and modern languages, philology, logic, mathematics, music, etiquette and the art of war. But in the Low Countries, the values of education had always appealed to a highly urban society infused with the importance of trade, business administration, and the bureaucratisation of government and law. To read and to write – as a merchant, skipper or artisan – was to prosper. Commerce was the primary driving force of literacy.

In the Calvinist Dutch Republic, to read was also to come closer to God. From the inception of the Dutch Republic its new pastors were deeply concerned with the provision of adequate schooling. A 1595 church regulation in Groningen ordered that each parish would be required to have a local school.¹⁴ The national Synod of Dordt of 1619 urged that all children, even the poorest in the country, should be allowed to profit from the benefits of education.¹⁵ The theologians who stressed this point were primarily worried about the triumph of doctrinal homogeneity, but also about the country's future. Education was essential to Calvinist theology. Every child should have the opportunity to be raised in a pious home, learning to read Scripture for themselves and to study the general principles of the Reformed faith.

The Synod of Dordt required that each schoolmaster teaching in the Dutch Republic should sign the new orthodox articles of faith. When this was enforced it became clear, especially in the eastern provinces, that many schoolmasters were in fact practising Catholics. Some magistrates dismissed their non-conformist schoolmasters (generally to the impoverishment of their local schools), but many others were more accommodating: in Haarlem in 1642 there were thirty-five Reformed schoolmasters, but also eleven Catholic and eight Mennonite schoolmasters.¹⁶ In Amersfoort, Catholic schoolmasters were employed until the 1680s.¹⁷ There is also little evidence that Catholic children were excluded from regular – and therefore Calvinist – schools.

The spiritual plurality of the Dutch Republic and the strong civic traditions of its pedagogical institutions meant that education was never the domain of the church alone. Local government determined the shape and style of available education throughout the Dutch Republic. Many schoolmasters played a considerable role in their local Reformed Church as precentor, warden or undertaker, but their appointment as teacher was made by secular municipal government rather than church syndics. Ministers were not the only ones to benefit from the literacy of their flock: the state too required its citizens to understand its ordinances, to pay their taxes and

duties. Education was regarded as a collective, municipal investment: in many cities the magistrates provided some funds for the education of the city's poor or orphans in order to ensure that they could fend for themselves later in life rather than rely on the municipal coffers for subsistence.

There was no national or provincial curriculum in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.¹⁸ Most children attended a local, vernacular 'Dutch school', where children from the ages of 4 or 5 onwards were taught the basic elements of Reformed piety, reading, and possibly writing and basic arithmetic. All schools, regardless of their size or location, were paying schools; with the exception of the registered poor, who could hope for a municipal subsidy, parents paid for the schooling of their children. It was therefore always at the initiative of parents that their children attended school. Most poor children did not go to school regularly or for an extended period, because they were required to work on the land or in their parents' workshop. However, most Dutch children did at some point attend a school: it was an ideal form of day-care, especially for the younger ones. There was no school year, and pupils could drop in and out as they (or their parents) wished. Schoolmaster David Beck's diary from his time in Arnhem in 1627 and 1628 reveals that some students attended his school for a year, but others were present only for six, three or one month, or even a week.¹⁹ Across the country there was a standard school week: six days a week, 8 a.m. to 11 a.m., and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., with Wednesday and Saturday afternoons off. Saturday's teaching would generally be devoted to preparation for the upcoming Sunday service, when some of the pupils would be expected to demonstrate their proficiency with the relevant passages of the Reformed catechism.

The reading lists prescribed for Dutch schools were dominated by pious Reformed literature and basic reading manuals.²⁰ In 1650 the magistrates of Zwolle issued an ordinance for their schoolmasters which stipulated the list of titles they were to use in their schools. This included ABC books, catechisms, a history of the life of Christ, compilations of model letters (*Sendtbrieven*), the New Testament, the Bible and the Psalms of David. Any other literature would have to be approved by the magistrates. In 1691, when the Zwolle magistrates issued a new regulation, the list of literature had changed little. The few additions included the proverbs of Solomon, the *Uiterste Wille* (*The Utmost Will*, a popular puritan tract) and the *Trap der Jeugd* (*Staircase of Youth*). Weekly newspapers, with their densely set paragraphs and small typefaces, were also deemed proper literature for more advanced students. Despite the proud regionalism of the Dutch Republic, the prescribed pedagogical literature in Zwolle differed little from that of other Dutch cities. In

Utrecht, Den Bosch, Dordrecht, Leiden and Groningen, schoolmasters would be expected to use similar pious books.²¹

Every child would be familiar with many of the devotional texts approved of in schools. Their schoolmaster would own numerous copies, and their parents might have a family Bible or a couple of pious tracts. They would hear passages from the Bible or a catechism read aloud at church on Sundays and most days at school; but it was unlikely that young children, especially those from a poor background, would own copies of these texts. The only book they were likely to own was a basic school book, an ABC book or *Materij boek* (a practice book). Costing 1 stuiver or less, these texts were the most widely used books of the seventeenth century. There were no standard editions, and content varied from city to city, but across the Dutch Republic these school books offered children a simple introduction to the literate world.

ABC books opened with an explanation of the alphabet and the text of the Lord's Prayer. In order to familiarise students with a basic vocabulary and practise pronunciation they included lists of common personal names, common job titles, countries, cities, food and drink, animals, the weather and the calendar. The *Trap der Jeugd*, a popular *Materij boek* written by the Frisian Carel de Gelliers, featured a brief description of the provinces of Friesland and Groningen, with all the names of the villages in the provinces. Example texts introduced pupils to different styles of *civilité* handwriting, as well as to black letter and roman typefaces. The texts were always devotional or virtuous in nature, including short essays 'on diligence', 'on the fear of God' or 'on the suffering of Christ'.

Teaching reading and pronunciation were the first elements of basic education. For many students they were also the last. Learning to write, which required the purchase of pens, ink and paper, was not taught concurrently with reading, and was available only to those with the means to persevere at school. Some ABC books contained introductions to letter writing with example letters. One shrewd schoolmaster wrote an example letter in a *Materie ofte Spelde-boecxken* in which a student encourages his parents to buy more school books for him.²² Other writing tasks included practising with common proverbs and sayings:

Belongings lost, nothing lost
 courage lost, much lost
 honour lost, more lost
 soul lost, everything lost.²³

The more ambitious, prosperous student could practise with calligraphic examples written by their schoolmaster, or purchase an engraved compilation of different hands. Printed compilations of example letters, like the *Gemeene Seyndtbrieven* (*Common Letters*) of the Haarlem schoolmaster Heyman Jacobi, also introduced models for legal contracts, bonds or business receipts (thus indicating that these advanced skills were indeed taught exclusively to older children).²⁴

There was one text on the curriculum of many Dutch schools which stood out among the wealth of pious literature: the *Spiegel der Jeught* (*Mirror of Youth*). Written in 1614 by Herman Allertsz Koster, a Contra-Remonstrant bookseller in Amsterdam, the *Spiegel* was a short introduction to the Dutch Revolt in the form of a dialogue between a father and son. It is fair to say that the *Spiegel* did not try to offer a balanced historical account. Koster had composed the dialogue after reading Willem Baudartius' hugely popular anti-Spanish *Morghen-wecker* (*Warning Call*, 1610), a pamphlet which exposed the deceitfulness of Spain through an account of the early Revolt.²⁵ The *Morghen-wecker* was a piece of political advocacy, filled with Latin quotations and references to historical sources, and could hardly be used at schools. So Koster transformed it into a catechising dialogue, devoid of scholarly terms but reminiscent of the structure of the pious catechisms children encountered every Sunday at church.

In around ninety pages the *Spiegel* discusses innumerable atrocities (real and imagined) committed by Philip II and his adherents against their loyal subjects in the Netherlands. At the start of the discussion the son is cautiously respectful, and asks his father: 'Was this tyranny as great as they say? Because of my youth I am not familiar with the terrible legends.' In a succession of anecdotes, in which the father dwells at length on executions, sackings, mutinous Spanish soldiers and sadistic royal lieutenants, the son is steadily convinced of the innate evil of Spanish government. Whipped up by his father, the son exclaims towards the end of the dialogue that 'the Jesuits, the last and worst offspring of the Pope and the final abomination of the Devil, how much they like to scheme!'

Throughout the dialogue the *Spiegel* is interspersed with crude woodcut illustrations demonstrating burnings, eviscerations, hangings and a few historical scenes: Alva's Blood Council in session, the execution of Egmont and Horne and the assassination of William of Orange. Despite its graphic, violent content, the *Spiegel* carried significant appeal in the Dutch schooling curriculum. To students, the work was refreshingly different from their other school books, and it had some resemblance to popular adventure



30 The *Spiegel der Jeught*, a perennial bestseller, which preserved the strongly anti-Spanish tone of the Dutch Republic's foundation narrative. Although directed primarily at the young, this text had a general appeal in Dutch society, and as we have seen, was one of the books to be carried on all outgoing VOC vessels.

stories, strictly prohibited at school for their vulgarity. To ministers and orthodox schoolmasters like Koster, the *Spiegel* instilled early appreciation of the Spanish Black Legend and a general aversion to the Catholic Church.

Koster's *Spiegel* proved a success. At least twenty editions appeared within fifty years, put out by as many different publishers. The production of the *Spiegel*, like many other school books in the Dutch Republic, required minimal investment. The few surviving copies of the *Spiegel* are printed on low-quality paper and with poor ink. The gory woodcuts were not necessarily placed at relevant passages, and were reused multiple times within the same edition. A 1644 edition by Otto Barentsz Smient uses one anonymous torture and execution scene three times.²⁶ New editions were composed with an older one at hand: in the 1660s printers still issued editions which named Philip III as the current ruler of Spain, even though he had died four decades earlier. The only significant update to the *Spiegel* occurred in the 1670s, when it was rewritten to accommodate a new enemy. In 1674 there appeared for the first time the *Nieuwe Spiegel der Jeught, of Fransche Tirannyne*,

which employed many of the tropes of the old *Spiegel* but included recent French atrocities in the invasion of the Dutch Republic in 1672.²⁷

The crowd instinct of Dutch publishers was an important element in the success of a school book. Once publishers sensed that a new title, like Carel de Gelliers' *Trap der Jeugd*, had gained some traction, they all rushed in to issue their own editions. To De Gelliers it was not an entirely welcome surprise: he had to warn readers of numerous poor reprints of his work shortly after its first appearance.²⁸ School books had a low retail price, but the only investment required to reprint a popular title was in paper and labour wages. Copies could often be sold in bulk to schoolmasters, further reducing distribution costs.

Another sort of school literature which required little investment was children's prints: broadsheets filled with woodcut illustrations of animals or adventures, with proverbs as captions. These posters, sold for a stuiver apiece, were a lively addition to a student's literature.²⁹ Margaretha van Bancken, the publisher of the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, invested in the production of one such broadsheet, the *Speelen van Cupido* (*Games of Cupid*), in the 1690s. As different surviving examples show, once the illustrations had been cut, the broadsheet could be reissued each year for a new class of pupils. Families like the Lootsmans and De Groots in Amsterdam, who specialised in cheap vernacular literature, reissued the same popular school books year after year.³⁰ The absence of change in educational practice, especially in the countryside, ensured that the fashionable school books of the seventeenth century could remain in print for more than a century.

INEXPENSIVE WISDOM

In 1591 the schoolmaster Dirk Adriaensz Valcooch wrote the *Regel der Duytsche Schoolmeesters* (*Rules for Dutch Schoolmasters*), a manual, in verse, on how to teach at schools.³¹ Valcooch was not impressed by many of his colleagues, and in the preface he thundered against those schoolmasters who opened a school when they had just learned how to write their own name and sing a psalm.³² Teaching, Valcooch asserted, was a noble art; his sustained verse tirade was ample demonstration of this. Undoubtedly intended for other schoolmasters who enjoyed the opportunity to sneer at their competitors, Valcooch's tract enjoyed a brief period of popularity, fostered by the recent mass exodus of schoolmasters from the Southern Netherlands.

This was a story which mirrored that of the transformation of the book trade. During the sixteenth century Antwerp had been the capital of

vernacular education in the Low Countries. Here one found the best schools, the most talented schoolmasters and the most up-to-date primers and lexicons. The success of Spanish armies in the south set off an exodus of many Protestant schoolmasters: more than 400 are known to have migrated to the Dutch Republic by the end of the sixteenth century.³³ The market was buoyant: hundreds of new schools were opened, prompting Valcooch to compose his cantankerous denunciation of falling standards. But he was not the first, or the last, to complain of illiterate schoolmasters. A popular subject of seventeenth-century engravings was a busy, disorderly classroom, in which a schoolmaster struggled to control a multitude of children who seemed to be learning very little. The more children a schoolmaster taught, the more he would earn; so the accusation that schoolmasters gathered in children but spent little time on their education was easily made.³⁴

In reality the quality of education was very variable. Depending on the size of the community, the purse of the authorities, and the talents of the local schoolmaster, a regular 'Dutch school' could range from a chaotic hovel to a respected institution. A popular alternative to the ubiquitous Dutch schools were 'French schools.' Apart from instruction in the French language, French schools often offered a wider range of courses, including mathematics, engineering and accounting. In larger cities there were numerous schools to choose from: by 1663 Utrecht was home to ten French schools and forty Dutch schools.³⁵ The price of schooling corresponded closely to its quality. In 1667 the magistrates of Alkmaar regulated the minimum fees charged in the city for schooling: a year's reading lessons cost 4 gulden, writing lessons cost 6 gulden and mathematical instruction cost 8 gulden.³⁶ On top of this, parents would be required to buy paper, ink and school books. Evening lessons were available for those who worked during the day, but they also came with the additional cost of candles.

Alkmaar's prices were a little above the national average.³⁷ A good education was expensive, but the city schools of Alkmaar hardly charged exorbitant prices. A talented private French schoolmaster might charge over 300 gulden a year for tuition, board and accommodation for a single pupil.³⁸ Such private boarding schools were often found in the rural Holland countryside, close enough to the major cities but distant enough to be free of civic regulation, or, for the students, the temptations of urban life. Worst off were rural schoolmasters in charge of a 'poor school', where most students were subsidised by local government. In rural Groningen schoolmasters received only 1 gulden a year for the education of a poor child. It is not difficult to imagine that they paid more attention to fee-paying children as a

result. The Groningen schoolmasters also received a measly annual stipend of 30 gulden. In order to make ends meet rural schoolmasters took on second jobs: one master in the village of Kolham was a carpenter; others were glaziers, farmers, or even an inn-keeper.³⁹

When Willem Bartjens was appointed schoolmaster in Zwolle he received a more princely salary of 300 gulden, in addition to free housing.⁴⁰ For this sum he was expected to teach poor children for free, and to offer instruction in French, reading, writing, arithmetic and accounting. But this was an income which could be supplemented from numerous sources. Schoolmasters could offer private lessons to their wealthier pupils; and they could sell school books, pens, paper and calligraphic exemplars. The more avaricious members of the trade clearly took advantage of these privileges. In 1636 the schoolmasters of Leiden were warned that they were forbidden to force children to buy books, paper or pens, and that they were to charge the same prices for stationery as the booksellers of the city.⁴¹ The schoolmasters were also required to cut the pens of their students for free. David Beck charged 2 stuivers for a custom-made poem or exemplar for his pupils, but he would also hand these out for free as prizes in student competitions. Beck often noted in his diary when he spent a few hours penning these poems.

David Beck's handwriting was a formidable asset in his career as schoolmaster. He was appointed in Arnhem after the magistrates were persuaded of his excellent penmanship.⁴² A beautiful, versatile hand was the recognised mark of a qualified teacher. The best calligraphers, like Jan vanden Velde and his pupils Nicolaes Boddington and Jean de la Chambre, won national fame for their calligraphic exemplars, engraved collections featuring dozens of example hands.⁴³ These exemplars were traditionally composed by schoolmasters for use by their pupils, or presented as gifts to illustrious patrons. The writing samples were surrounded by elaborate displays of penmanship, portraying mythological figures, beasts or ships. From the 1590s onwards some of these samples were published as engraved collections. The new genre was pioneered in 1594 by the Amsterdam cartographer Jodocus Hondius, who cut and published the *Theatrum Artis Scribendi*, a collection of hands by different schoolmasters.

This was one part of the trade in school books which was restricted to a limited circle of entrepreneurs. After Hondius' initial publication, the market for engraved exemplars was almost wholly dominated by a select number of schoolmasters, like Jan vanden Velde, who published his magnificent *Spiegel der Schrijfkonste* (*Mirror of Calligraphy*) in 1605. In order for the engravings to be faithful to the intricacies of the original calligraphy,



31 In this vivid image of a school class, placed on the title-page of a mathematical primer, a mother complains that her child has been too frequently beaten. Neither the father, presumably of a different child, nor the schoolmaster shows much sympathy. The four children in the foreground tactfully bury their heads in their reading.

they had to be cut by the schoolmasters themselves, or by specialist artists familiar with the hands – the schoolmistress Maria Strick's exemplars were engraved by her husband Hans, a talented engraver.⁴⁴ Although the investment required to publish these exemplars was significant, the profits were even more substantial. A successful text could make a teacher's reputation. There were few authors who made money from their publications, but celebrated schoolmasters were a notable exception. They could count on sales to students across the country, as well as to admirers in the profession. Johannes Heuvelman, a French schoolmaster in Haarlem whose collection of books was auctioned in 1668, owned thirty manuscript and thirty-nine printed exemplars by famous schoolmasters.⁴⁵ On 10 September 1639, the French schoolmaster Hendrick Meurs advertised in the *Courante uyt Italien* that he had available for sale at his school various printed exemplars, featuring the hands of numerous celebrated schoolmasters.⁴⁶

Schoolmaster Meurs was one of the first tradesmen to take advantage of newspaper advertising. Thus far, only booksellers and publishers had used

newspapers for commercial publicity. Soon schoolmasters across the country were advertising their school books and their services in newspapers, paving the way for a new artisanal public to engage with the weekly press.⁴⁷ Schoolmasters like Samuel Barard in Amsterdam announced their intention to start a new school; others reminded readers that they had moved premises, or were still in the business. Especially the proprietors of French schools in small towns or rural locations, in Abcoude, Beverwijk or Alphen aan den Rijn, seem to have taken to the newspapers to promote their services. They marketed their teaching programmes to potential parents in impressive lists of valuable skills. Reading, writing and arithmetic naturally featured in most advertisements, but so did accounting, music, general 'pious virtues' and engineering. Private girls' schools, like that of Mademoiselle Anna Thibaut in Amsterdam, offered lessons in etiquette, singing, drawing, sewing and other crafts.⁴⁸ Jan Caegman, French schoolmaster in Hoorn, had the rare privilege of an English wife, and notified parents that she would be able to teach young girls French and English.⁴⁹

In advertising, the more distinguished the better. One anonymous schoolmaster made the alluring announcement that:

If anyone wants to learn the art of Italian and maritime accounting, not simply as it is taught in schools, but in such a manner that one can immediately enter the trade and use all methods of accounting as they are truly used, and defend and justify the principles of the art, then they should address themselves to the Raamsteeg, opposite the 'Black Scissors' in Amsterdam.⁵⁰

And what parent would not want their favourite son to be taught by Monsieur Beron, stable master of the great stable of the King of France and former master of the 'Royal Academy' in Sedan? Beron announced with great fanfare in the *Amsterdamsche Courant* of 21 July 1685 that he had settled in Liège, where he intended to teach horse-riding, fencing, dancing, shooting, military strategy, mathematics (with particular devotion to the study of fortifications) and, of course, the French language. It is curious that Beron thought that parents reading the Amsterdam paper would actually consider sending their children to the Southern Netherlands to avail themselves of the opportunity of his instruction. Clearly Monsieur Beron was not a modest man.⁵¹

As far as schoolmasters went, Monsieur Beron was in a class apart, directing his appeal to the noblest of newspaper readers. Most French

schoolmasters, like David Beck, appealed to a wider segment of society, teaching the children of local dignitaries, but also the sons and daughters of farmers, skippers and inn-keepers. One schoolmaster advertised his services with a board outside his school bearing the words 'Inexpensive wisdom'.⁵² The vernacular schools of the Dutch Republic offered something for everyone.

CLASSICAL REPUBLIC

A top-quality French school like that of Monsieur Beron was not the only available route to elite education. Entry to university, to the world of scholars, statesmen, ministers, doctors and jurists, required a very different path, one completed at a Latin school. To many young men – and this, in contrast to the vernacular schools, was a world of men alone – attending a Latin school opened a whole new world.

The Northern Netherlands had a distinguished institutional history of classical education. Latin schools, known historically as 'great schools', had for centuries prepared the sons of bourgeois households for distinguished careers as lawyers, priests or administrators. The Latin schools of Zwolle and Deventer were internationally renowned institutions in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, but many declined during the turbulent years of the Dutch Revolt. The cultural energy of the early seventeenth century sparked a new golden age of classical education: around 1650, ninety-two Latin schools could be found across the country. There were Latin schools in towns as small as Borculo or Wageningen in eastern Gelderland, with around a thousand inhabitants. Some of the largest, like those of Utrecht, taught 400 students; smaller schools, like that in Appingedam in rural Groningen, had 30 to 40 students. At the cost of around 10–12 gulden a year for tuition, Latin schools were cheaper than most French schools, and they offered upward mobility for a middling class of bright Dutch students. Altogether around 7 per cent of Dutch boys aged over 10 would attend a Latin school in the Dutch Republic, a proportion unrivalled anywhere in Europe.⁵³

Graduating from a Latin school was an essential prerequisite for attendance at a university: one would only usually be sent to such a school if progressing to higher education was the goal. In 1618 the Remonstrant minister Johannes Wtenbogaert told his nephew that he should send his son to Latin school first, in order to test his intellect; he advised that he could always attend a French school later if he did not make the grade.⁵⁴

Nearly all the students who attended the Latin school at Appingedam would end up at the nearby University of Groningen. In order to prepare students for university, the Latin school programme was very different from vernacular schools. Students had to have at least the basic capacity to read and write to enter the Latin school, after which they would be taught purely in classical languages. There were few opportunities to learn modern languages, mathematics, engineering or geography at Latin school: the entire curriculum was devoted to Latin and Greek grammar, calligraphy, literature, history and poetry.

By the early 1620s the professors of the University of Leiden, the foremost Dutch university, were concerned about the quality of the local Latin schools. They had noticed that many of their incoming students had insufficient Latin to comprehend their lectures. The complaints quickly reached the regents of the States of Holland, who did not take these concerns lightly. A decline in the standards of the Latin schools and university would ultimately manifest itself in slipping standards in government. In 1625 the States promulgated a regulation for all Latin schools in the province, the *Schoolordre*.⁵⁵ Drawn up in consultation with the senate of the University of Leiden, the rectors of all Holland's Latin schools and the ecclesiastical syndics of the province, the ordinance set out a standardised curriculum for Latin education in Holland.

The regulation divided the Latin programme into six classes, each roughly corresponding to a year's study. Every half year, students would get a chance to test their knowledge in examinations and potentially move up to a higher class. The schooling hours were similar to those in the vernacular schools, with Wednesday and Saturday afternoons free. In the lowest classes, students spent most of their time on grammar and calligraphy: for their first practice texts, they would use the letters of Cicero, Cato's *Disticha*, and the moral instructions from Erasmus's *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium* (*A Handbook on Good Manners for Children*). In the middle years, students would become familiar with Terence, Ovid, Virgil, Caesar and Isocrates, and receive their first introduction to Greek grammar. In the final two years students enjoyed more private study time, and would be expected to learn the basic elements of logic and rhetoric. A range of more advanced classical authors, including Livy, Horace, Homer, Euripides, Justinus and Quintus Curtius Rufus, would also be on the curriculum. At the behest of Holland's ministers, study of the Heidelberg catechism and the Bible (in Latin and Greek) were part of the curriculum in every year. Every class opened and closed with prayer. From the second class onwards students would also

devote two hours a week to academic disputations, an essential element of future university life.⁵⁶

The demanding new curriculum required a new set of standardised school books. Here too the States of Holland took the initiative. In cooperation with the University of Leiden, the States commissioned a set of twenty-three titles, updated or annotated by the leading scholars of the day. These included basic *Rudimenta* and *Grammatica*, Erasmus's *Colloquia* and *De Civilitate Morum Puerilium*, a Latin catechism, modern works of logic and rhetoric, selected letters and orations of Cicero, and works by Cato, Aesop, Ovid, Horace, Homer, Sulpicius Severus and Aphthonius. Most titles were ordered in print runs of 1,000 copies.⁵⁷ The copies were divided between the twenty Latin schools of Holland: the largest school, in Amsterdam, received 3,000 copies (an average of 130 of each of the commissioned texts), while the smallest schools in Schiedam, Monnickendam, Medemblik, Purmerend and Woerden received just over 200 copies each. In total the States of Holland spent 4,604 gulden, 14 stuivers and 10 penningen on the new school books.

Abraham and Bonaventura Elzevier, the printers of the University of Leiden, were the lucky beneficiaries of this order. Given the close involvement of the scholars and senate of Leiden in composing the new reading lists, it seemed proper to grant the Elzeviers the privilege. The States' representatives of other towns, wary as ever of the concentration of too many privileges in a single city, ensured that the Elzeviers did not receive a monopoly on the production of the school books. The other seventeen cities of the States had their own Latin schools, and wished to favour their own printers – or, at least, not those of Leiden – with a lucrative business opportunity. In the end the Elzeviers did not even print all the texts stipulated in 1625: the edition of Aphthonius was produced by Abraham Commelijn in Leiden.⁵⁸ Perhaps Abraham and Bonaventura Elzevier, who had just taken over the family business, found the order too large to handle on their own within the year.

The books paid for by the States of Holland were meant to encourage the Latin schools to adopt the new regulation, rather than offer them a lifetime supply of textbooks. There were a number of classical authors mentioned in the school programme, like Curtius Rufus, Virgil, Xenophon, Euripides and Caesar, who were not published on the orders of the regents in 1625. The States expected the rectors of the Latin schools to order new copies in the future, and scholarly publishers to provide the necessary reprints on their own initiative.

Ultimately the ordinance was not strictly enforced; the States left that to the individual cities. Over time, observance of the rules became more lax. In 1669 a schoolmaster named Georgio Hercule announced in an Amsterdam newspaper that he would be teaching at the new Latin school of Zaandam, where pupils were taught not only Latin, but also French and arithmetic.⁵⁹ Imagine the horror in Leiden. Nonetheless, to the Dutch book trade, the 1625 regulation was of immense importance. It provided the stimulus for the mass production of updated editions of the classics, virtually all in small pocketbook formats. This, it would turn out, was one of the greatest strengths of the Dutch book trade.

The number of Latin schools in the Dutch Republic ensured that there was abundant demand for cheap Latin school books. But the small classics produced by the Elzeviers for the Latin schools found an unexpected audience abroad, especially in France and England.⁶⁰ The texts themselves were nothing new. Cicero had been printed thousands of times throughout Europe before the Dutch Republic had even emerged as a viable state. But the popularity of these classics, sometimes subtitled with the prestigious phrase ‘in usum scholarum’ (for use in the schools), rested on the design of the books, small enough to fit in one’s palm, yet still with letters clear enough to be of scholarly use. The success of the pocketbook format was partly due to novelty, and partly to price. Most of the books ordered by the States of Holland in 1625 cost 2, 3 or 4 stuivers a piece. The history of Alexander the Great by Curtius Rufus, published in folio, might cost 6 gulden, or 120 stuivers – in a 24mo pocketbook this price was reduced by 95 per cent, to 6 stuivers.

For a negligible price, one could own a pristine edition of any Latin classic. This was as appealing to serious scholars as to impecunious students at a Latin school. The small size of the Dutch classics also meant that they were cheap to distribute; and the sophistication of their printing minimised the number of potential pirate editions. It was clear that this was a winning formula. Throughout the seventeenth century, the Elzeviers would publish only a handful of classical authors in folio or in medium-sized quarto editions. Some of the Latin pocketbooks, however, were reprinted on an almost annual basis. We know of more than fifty editions of Curtius Rufus printed in the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth century; likewise of eighty-two small editions of Ovid, and over one hundred of Cicero. Gerardus Joannes Vossius’s Latin *Grammatica*, written specifically for the Holland school order, was issued at least forty times in seventy years.

The trade in classics was strengthened further by the diversity of the Latin school programmes throughout the country. The regents of Holland

had hoped that their school regulation would be adopted by the other provinces. This never happened: instead most cities and provinces insisted on introducing variation into their own curricula. In Middelburg Plutarch could be found on the programme; in Dordrecht Suetonius and Sallust were added to the reading lists; in Friesland students also read Plautus, Catullus and Sallust. By the 1630s the school books of Jan Amos Comenius, a Czech schoolmaster and pedagogue who would later live in exile in Amsterdam, were added to many Latin reading lists.⁶¹ Altogether we estimate that close to 1,000 pocketbook classics were published in the Dutch Golden Age, representing somewhere around a million copies, a stupendous number. They also, incidentally and somewhat unexpectedly, played a major role in establishing the international reputation of the Dutch book industry.

The production of small classics would end up being dominated by the most prominent publishers of Amsterdam and Leiden: the Elzeviers, the Hackius, the Blaeus and Johannes Janssonius. The production of Latin grammars and school books for the lower classes of Latin school was more evenly distributed, allowing publishers in smaller towns a piece of the market. But Latin schools also provided other business opportunities for local booksellers. Every six months, students at Latin school could take examinations to move up to the next class. At the end of the exam period a promotion would be held to celebrate the students who had finished the final year, and to recognise the talents of the best students in lower years. These promotion ceremonies were public events, and were often attended by proud parents and local magistrates. The rector and the best students held orations at the ceremony, or demonstrated their skill as academic disputants. Sometimes the orations and disputations were printed afterwards. In Delft, parents of children holding orations were obliged to have the texts printed, an additional financial burden which they seem to have resented greatly.⁶² One can imagine that the printers who received these orders had fewer qualms.

The most profitable privilege associated with Latin schools was the municipal contract to deliver prize books.⁶³ Graduating students and other high-achievers would be rewarded for their efforts at the promotion ceremony with a number of prize books, selected by the rector. Invariably these were editions of Latin classics, but they were presented in exquisite bindings, stamped with the municipal arms, and inscribed with a personal note from the rector. To students they were cherished possessions, and to booksellers who received orders for prize books, like Reinier Leers in Rotterdam or Simon de Putter in The Hague, they provided a welcome bi-annual

income. De Putter received almost 1,000 gulden from the magistrates of The Hague between 1644 and 1650 for the delivery of prize books.⁶⁴

We know that the rectors of Latin schools had a good eye for appropriate prize books. Some of the most distinguished collections of books auctioned in the Dutch Republic were assembled by Latin school rectors. With annual salaries ranging between 600 and 1,300 gulden a year, rectors could build a sizeable library.⁶⁵ When the library of Paulus Junius, rector of the Leiden Latin school, was to be auctioned on 22 April 1670, a newspaper advertisement announced that the collection consisted 'of many rare and old books, especially literary and antiquarian titles, Greek and Latin histories, orations and poetry, all bound very neatly, many with gilded bindings.'⁶⁶ It was indeed a very fine collection, composed of over 1,800 works, including 18 books by the celebrated Venetian printer Aldus Manutius, over 100 books by the Parisian masters Robert and Henri Estienne, and hundreds of items by the Blaeus, Elzeviers and the Plantin-Moretus publishing house in Antwerp. The highlight of the collection was the rich variety of small-format classics, precisely the sort of books Junius would have used at his school: he owned 8 editions of Curtius Rufus, 16 of Horace, 13 of Tacitus, 19 of Terence and 24 of Virgil. While Junius possessed many sought-after sixteenth-century editions, his collection is also a demonstration of the extraordinary dominance of Dutch publishers in the production of small-format classics by the middle of the seventeenth century.

The books of Paulus Junius brought to auction were overwhelmingly classical. The collection contained a handful of French titles and fifty Dutch books, chiefly Bibles, translations of the classics, lexicons, psalms and a few histories. This was a purposeful, scholarly library, like all libraries of rectors brought to auction. Their collections were utilitarian, but they were also a reflection of the world which they inhabited, far removed from the vernacular vulgarity of the *Spiegel der Jeught* and other popular literature. If Junius had a secret penchant for adventure stories, then this went unnoticed by the buyers present at the library auction.

Despite their Latinate programme, Junius's students, and those of other Latin schools in the country, certainly had a taste for vernacular literature. When aged 14, the scholar Adriaan Beverland read Bontekoe's travel journal to escape from his grammars at the Middelburg Latin school.⁶⁷ The tales of Amadis de Gaul were enjoyed by Johan de Witt and Hugo Grotius.⁶⁸ The adventures of Amadis, Blanchefleur and other mediaeval romances were targeted precisely at wealthy teenagers at Latin school: the future lawyers, doctors and statesmen of the country. At a price of 8 or 9 stuivers, such texts

were out of reach of most regular school-goers. Popular literature of this nature, when marketed to adolescent readers, was intended for a select upper class of students taking their first steps in an adult world.⁶⁹

Latin school students found themselves in an increasingly vernacular society. By the early eighteenth century many smaller Latin schools had shut their doors, as French schools gained ever greater popularity with the scions of the mercantile elite. But for most of the seventeenth century, the ministers, regents, scholars and lawyers as well as many merchants and artisans who attended Latin schools – the professional book-buying and reading public of the country – shared a lifelong respect for the classics imbued by their education. Latin school separated them from the rest of society and bonded them to the literary world of ancient languages. The Latin school programme was reassuringly international: across Europe, students preparing for university would engage with the same classical texts and learn the same grammatical rules as Dutch students did.

Many a student will have dreamt of Amadis or Bontekoe as they returned once more to Vossius's *Rhetorica* or Erasmus. But to the Dutch book trade,



32 This copy of Sallust was given as a prize to a student of the Latin school in The Hague in 1662. The elegant title-page engraving is typical of small-format Latin classics printed in the Dutch Republic.

the reinvigoration of the Latin schools was one of the cornerstones of their flourishing market. School dropouts would never turn back to their Latin classics, but to many future book buyers and readers, the small-format histories and poetry were the texts which were cherished into older years. These were also the sorts of texts which they might purchase again later in life, to pore over in a quiet moment, to read with colleagues and friends, or to give to their own children making their way to university.

CHAPTER SEVEN



The Life Academic

BY THE THIRD DECADE of the seventeenth century it was abundantly clear that Amsterdam would play a dominant role in the new Dutch state. Its economic primacy was now so assured that it did not need to be stated; Amsterdam could allow Dordrecht its formal dignity as first city of Holland in the deliberations of the States of Holland, secure in the knowledge that ultimately its interests could not be ignored. But in one respect at least Amsterdam played second fiddle: for it was Leiden, the home of Holland's only university, which emerged as the intellectual powerhouse of the new state. Forged in the agonies of the Revolt, the University of Leiden had swiftly emerged as one of the greatest of the new Protestant academies, eclipsing even Calvin's Geneva, the fountainhead of the family of Reformed churches. What is more, its foundation charter had ensured that it would remain unchallenged, stipulating explicitly that 'no other similar school may ever be founded and erected in Holland and Zeeland'.¹

As the years went by the city fathers of Amsterdam found this situation increasingly irksome. No-one could deny that Amsterdam, with its sophisticated economy, art and book market, was a cultural centre of some importance. That the city's sons should be obliged to trek to Leiden to complete their formal education was increasingly resented. Leiden, it was darkly insinuated, had lost its way. A magnet for the sons of Europe's Protestant nobility and their rowdy hangers-on, tales of student violence made the Amsterdam elite increasingly reluctant to consign their adolescent sons to its overcrowded streets. By 1626 the Amsterdam magistrates were discussing how the situation might be addressed without impinging on Leiden's privileges. The solution proposed was certainly ingenious. Taking inspiration from an earlier foundation in Middelburg, Amsterdam would have an 'illustrious school', an academy with all the accoutrements of higher education except degrees.² Yet it would not be a pale imitation of the university teaching regime; rather, it would adopt a self-consciously modern curriculum, catering to the needs of a mercantile clientele. In addition, it was

envisaged that its public lectures would be attended by interested citizens as well as by its young pupils – indeed professors teaching 10 o'clock classes were warned not to let their lectures run over, so traders could be at the Bourse in time for the opening bell at 11. This was a new concept for a new age: the conscious cultivation of an educated elite, served by an institution focused on both polished letters and practical skills. From this would emerge educated, cultivated statesmen, well equipped for the new world Amsterdam was creating: the *mercator sapiens*, the wise merchant.³

Leiden did not give up without a fight. The luring away of two of its leading professors, in conditions of some secrecy, to head the new illustrious school was an obvious provocation. The inaugural lectures given by Caspar Barlaeus and Gerardus Joannes Vossius, setting out their vision of a reformed higher education, added fuel to the fire. But this was still some months away, since in June 1631 Leiden's Academic Senate made a formal complaint to the Court of Holland, requesting that the new institution should be suppressed. Briefs were drawn up and legal precedents marshalled. In the end, as everyone recognised as inevitable, a compromise was achieved. It was hard to legislate against new education ventures in a state with such a rapidly expanding commercial class, and Leiden was already struggling to cope with the number of its students. When Amsterdam made clear that it would not challenge Leiden's degree-granting powers, the case was quietly settled. Amsterdam could now embark on its great experiment: the design of an educational system outside the traditional humanist curriculum, combining practical training in new disciplines such as surveying with respect for the inherited tradition of Latin letters. Only time would tell whether the new educational ideal would have any purchase outside the imagination of its first proponents.⁴ Did the wise merchant, the *mercator sapiens*, have any real place in the cut and thrust of business life?

LAND OF LEARNING

Until the foundation of Leiden in 1575, the only universities in the Low Countries had been Louvain and Douai, marooned in the loyalist south, safely and irredeemably Catholic. The new northern state required a university, and Leiden's resistance through the sieges of 1573–1574 had earned it an appropriate reward for a heroism which probably saved the rebel cause. Established as a self-consciously Protestant institution as the war still raged around it, the university was already three years old when Amsterdam, to this point still loyal to King Philip II, joined the revolt.

The foundation of the University of Leiden was in this respect an important statement of nationhood, actively promoted by William of Orange and assured of a general goodwill that, for once, overwhelmed the natural parochialism of the quarrelsome Holland towns. The circumstances of its foundation assured Leiden an iconic status in the new Republic, and indeed throughout Protestant Europe. Leiden suffered none of the growing pains of many new universities, and swiftly became one of the leading centres of Protestant learning. Intellectuals flocked from all over Europe to take up positions in the new academy, and Christophe Plantin, Europe's most respected printer, honoured the new venture by establishing a branch office in the city. Leiden, until this point a relatively insignificant presence on the print map of Europe, would rapidly outstrip Louvain as a centre of scholarly publication.

The hero of this transformation of Leiden's profile as a printing city was one of its professors, Thomas Erpenius. Erpenius was one of the great Oriental scholars of the age. He had acquired his interest in Oriental languages while studying theology at Leiden. Encouraged by Joseph Justus Scaliger, he had travelled Europe searching for the best teachers, before returning to Leiden to a new position as professor of Arabic. This began an extraordinarily fertile decade during which Erpenius built a Europe-wide reputation as a scholar, and in the process cemented Leiden's position at the centre of this field of scholarship. In 1613 Erpenius published his milestone *Grammatica Arabica*; for this, and at great expense, he had commissioned the cutting of new Arabic type. This became a theme, indeed almost an obsession, and in the years before his death, Erpenius would add more exotic fonts, including Hebrew, Syriac and Chaldean. None of this came cheap; like many professors, Erpenius was able to underwrite the cost of this by taking on paid employment beyond his university duties: in his case, acting as official interpreter for the States government, translating incoming Arabic despatches from rulers in Africa and the Levant and drafting replies.

When Erpenius died, at the tragically early age of 40, the competition to buy his library was intense. The books and manuscripts were secured for Cambridge University Library by the Duke of Buckingham; the precious fonts, after a brief period when the widow of Erpenius attempted to continue the press, were secured by the Elzeviers. The fact that they paid 8,000 gulden to secure the Oriental fonts suggests this was more a matter of prestige than economics, and indeed, the investment of such a vast sum was soon a cause of some regret.⁵ Within a year Isaac, their first owner, had surrendered them to Abraham and Bonaventura and in 1631 they appealed to the university

for financial help, claiming that the costs of production, especially proof-reading, were ruinous. This was not surprising. The market for texts in Arabic was small and widely distributed around Europe, and for the more esoteric languages even more so. But the Oriental types were a possession of huge symbolic importance for the curators of the university. In 1627 they went so far as to extend to the compositors and printers working on the Oriental press the freedom from beer excise normally granted to members of the university: a recognition that in this part of the print trade theirs was highly skilled intellectual work. Subsequent Dutch university foundations took their cue from Leiden, insisting that their appointed university printers should be fully equipped with Hebrew, Arabic and other Oriental types; one can imagine that, in a place like Groningen, they would mostly have been employed for small decorative phrases on student dissertations, if they were used at all.⁶

No seventeenth-century printer made light of their burdens, but even if the Erpenius types were more of a symbolic totem, the Elzeviers still profited hugely from their relationship with the University of Leiden. When Isaac wrestled the title of university printer from Jan Jacobsz Paets in 1620 he began a century-long relationship that would bring great profit to the family, and contribute very substantially to the international standing of the university. Abraham and Bonaventura, who inherited the business in 1625, were the best typographers of the family, and they involved themselves deeply in the affairs of the university. One of their six presses was permanently reserved for any works the professors might desire to have published. Between 1622 and 1652, they published a stream of works for the university's most distinguished scholars, including the poet, classicist and librarian of the University of Leiden, Daniel Heinsius. The other professors, who found the Elzeviers rather too inclined to take sides in matters of scholarly debate, resented their closeness to Heinsius, who used his privileged position to settle old scores. But if the Elzeviers drove a hard bargain with the local scholars, they also had a good eye for a reputation-enhancing opportunity. Discovering in 1638 that Galileo was unable to publish his work in Italy, they secured the manuscript for Leiden. Galileo's masterwork, the *Discorsi*, would be published in a neat quarto with a preface from the author thanking the Elzeviers for rescuing his work in this way. It was a milestone for the international renown of the Elzeviers, and it reinforced the stature of Leiden and the Republic as international centres of scholarly letters and tolerant intellectual enquiry. After the scrappy decades of the Remonstrant controversy, this was the face the Dutch wanted to show to the world;

and it is certainly the narrative that has been most attractive to modern observers.

PROMOTIONS FOR SALE

Through the lifetime of the new Dutch state, no other institution of higher learning would rival the prestige of Leiden. But it would not be the only Dutch university for long. Although students flocked to Leiden in considerable numbers, one institution could not ultimately meet the demand for trained theologians, doctors and jurists in the expanding new state. Nor were the other provinces prepared for long to tolerate allowing Holland a monopoly of university training. Here, as in so many respects, the particularistic instinct of the Dutch provinces was strong; regents in other provinces were also not unmindful that hosting a local university could be an important stimulus to the local economy. Students for whom Leiden was too distant, or too expensive, would also profit from the establishment of institutions closer to home. By 1648 there were five Dutch universities in five provinces: Franeker (in Friesland) and Groningen in the north, Harderwijk in Gelderland, Utrecht and Leiden.

The foundation of these new universities was not a straightforward process, as there were many local sensibilities to be taken into account. Aside from the competition between provinces, local rivalries within them were often intense. Overijssel would remain without a university because none of its three cities (Deventer, Kampen and Zwolle) would allow either of the others to host one. Harderwijk, a small fishing town in northern Gelderland, was only chosen because the capitals of the three quarters (Arnhem, Nijmegen and Zutphen) had the same problem. In the 1650s the magistrates of Nijmegen would go on to establish an illustrious school which rivalled Harderwijk; for its inauguration they poached Harderwijk's rector and professor of law, Pieter de Greve.⁷ In 1656 Nijmegen announced that their illustrious school would confer doctoral degrees, in effect transforming the institution into a university. Although this experiment lasted only two decades, it seriously drained the potential pool of Harderwijk students. To make matters worse for the Harderwijk community, an illustrious school opened its doors in nearby Zutphen in 1686.

The intense local rivalry did not help Harderwijk to attract either students or professorial talent, and it remained the smallest and poorest of the five universities. Franeker, founded in 1585, enjoyed a head-start over its local northern rival Groningen, established in 1614, though thereafter the

two institutions contrived to coexist in reasonable harmony, united at least in a shared jealousy of Leiden. Utrecht, founded as an illustrious school in 1634 and promoted to a university two years later, would ultimately become the second most distinguished of the Dutch institutions, but Leiden remained in a class of its own. So, in a rather different sense, did Harderwijk, not least as the butt of some pointed mockery. In order to attract students, Harderwijk had a reputation for cheap promotions. A malicious verse did the rounds which mused that:

Harderwijk is a city of commerce
Here they sell herring, blueberries and doctoral promotions.

Indeed, Harderwijk promotions could be so efficient that in 1735 the Swede Carl Linnaeus (later celebrated as the father of modern taxonomy) received a PhD from Harderwijk on the causes of malaria within a week of arriving in the town. He submitted his thesis on a Monday, wandered around for a few days, and defended his thesis on the Friday before heading for the brighter lights of Amsterdam.

Carl Linnaeus was certainly not the only student to take advantage of a foreign university offering a straightforward path to a doctoral degree. And while Harderwijk may have suffered from sneering rivals, the fact that the institution could offer doctoral degrees was a significant advantage over the illustrious schools, which often lost students to universities in search of a promotion. When the regents of Nijmegen justified the elevation of their illustrious school to a university they cited a petition from a local student who wished to gain a promotion at home rather than elsewhere. Critics may have pointed out that the student's father was a local magistrate and that the affair smelled strongly of nepotism, but the regents had a point. In order to practise as a lawyer or a doctor, one required a university degree. Civic loyalties in the Dutch Republic were strong, but not dogmatic enough to sacrifice potential high-flying careers.

For this reason, many of the illustrious schools founded in imitation of Amsterdam suffered an early demise. The illustrious school founded in Middelburg in 1651 shut its doors in the 1660s; its first professor of law was fired within a year of opening because he could not attract any students.⁸ The illustrious school in Deventer could attract only three or four students a year by the 1690s – others did not fare much better.⁹ The fate of these schools was often closely tied to the presence of a celebrated professor and a generous financial sponsor. When the illustrious school of Breda was

founded by Prince Frederick Henry in 1646 he ensured that the distinguished theologian André Rivet from Leiden became its rector. The school flourished for a few years, but after Frederick Henry and Rivet died, the institution came to a swift end.

The legacy of the short-lived illustrious school of Breda was an intense period of scholarly printing in the Brabant fortress town. While the illustrious schools of the Dutch Republic did not confer degrees, they hosted numerous disputation series, which, as befitted a proper institution of higher education, were to be printed. Johannes Janssonius van Waesberghe, a talented young publisher in Utrecht, had opened a branch printing house in Breda in order to print the disputations and orations for the illustrious school, as well as provide its professors and students with the convenience of a local bookshop. After the death of Rivet, Van Waesberghe anticipated the forthcoming decline and closed his shop, focusing solely on the university business provided by Utrecht.

LODGING WITH VOSSIUS

When the University of Leiden first opened its doors, its professors were not particularly well paid. The first professors appointed at Leiden in 1575 received a salary of 300 or 400 gulden a year, barely matching that of an ordinary minister. Only Guilelmus Feugueraeus, appointed professor of theology, received 600 gulden. But as the new state grew in confidence and security, professors received their share of the new prosperity. Justus Lipsius was paid 500 gulden a year on his appointment as professor of history in 1578, but with successive augmentations this had risen to 1,000 gulden by the time of his departure in 1591. The theology professors were always well looked after. Franciscus Gomarus received 800 gulden as a salary upon his appointment in 1594, and Jacobus Arminius 1,200 at his appointment in 1603. Unless Gomarus also received a pay increase (and there is no evidence of this in the archival records), this could hardly have improved the atmosphere between them.

All the Dutch universities were keen to make eye-catching appointments, and when Justus Lipsius left Leiden in 1591 the curators cast their net wide in an attempt to find a suitable replacement. They finally alighted on the internationally renowned philologist Joseph Justus Scaliger; but it required two years to put together the financial package that would lure him away from Angers, in western France. Eventually they agreed to pay the substantial sum of 2,000 gulden a year, though this required a large

subvention from the States of Holland. Scaliger was also guaranteed free housing, and, most unusually, excused any obligations to teach. Such were the fruits of celebrity; but at least the university ensured it got its money's worth by ensuring that Scaliger's stately progress through France towards Leiden was attended by maximum publicity. This, and the moving expenses for Scaliger's household and library, cost another huge sum of 4,500 gulden.

The aggressive campaign waged by the Illustrious School at Amsterdam to recruit outstanding teachers put further upward pressure on professorial salaries. It was not the 2,600 gulden paid to its star professor Gerardus Joannes Vossius that raised eyebrows – by this time Leiden could match the sum, and in fact paid a salary of 2,000 gulden to the French classicist Claudius Salmasius in 1632. It was more that Amsterdam was able to pay similar sums to individuals without Vossius's international reputation or, indeed, devotion to scholarship. Other universities faced the same inflationary pressures. Even little Harderwijk was obliged to offer 1,000 gulden on occasion, though since the annual budget on its foundation in 1648 was only 8,000 gulden, and the university planned to appoint seven professors, this level of expenditure on salaries was ultimately unsupportable. But then the curators of Harderwijk were acutely aware of their status as a feeder institution for the larger universities. Only twelve professors arrived in Harderwijk from a position elsewhere, but fifty-two would leave for better prospects. The limited horizons of a small fishing port of three thousand inhabitants probably played as large a part in this as the desire for higher wages. With Leiden the situation was exactly the reverse: a position at Leiden was a clear promotion. Harderwijk found it difficult enough to fight off competition from local institutions such as the illustrious schools in Nijmegen and Deventer; Franeker also faced difficulties in retaining staff. Some cities with illustrious schools took to offering their best preachers the honorary title of professor to deter them from abandoning their congregations for a post in the larger cities.

The salaries on offer in the universities were generous, but so were the opportunities for augmenting earnings by other means. In addition to delivering their formal lectures, university teachers could also charge substantial sums for private tuition, usually in small classes of six to ten. So popular were these classes, both to the better-off students and to their teachers, that professors were not infrequently rebuked for skipping their lectures for the better-remunerated tutorials. And professors often put to good use the spare rooms in the large houses they occupied by taking in boarders. In Amsterdam, Vossius charged between 300 and 400 gulden a year for the

privilege of lodging in his house and sharing his board; non-resident students who attended his tutorials paid 12 gulden a month. All told, Vossius's total annual remuneration as professor in Amsterdam was probably comfortably in excess of 5,000 gulden. Vossius was not unusual in maximising his income in this way. In Utrecht, the celebrated orthodox theologian Gisbertus Voetius boarded no fewer than thirteen students, charging each 300 gulden a year during the semester, and another 50 gulden during vacation.¹⁰

Despite skipping the occasional class and other, sometimes more serious, derelictions, professors were undoubtedly persons of respect within the community. They lived well, and they were expected to provide moral, theological and sometimes political leadership. They were also figures of real importance in the book industry. The professoriate included among their number some of the most influential theological writers of the day. Gomarus spent a career defining and defending orthodoxy in print; his spiritual heir, and actual successor at Groningen, Samuel Maresius, was scarcely less active. By setting the topics of their students' dissertations, often conceived as a series on a particular theological or controversial theme, they could both set the agenda of theological debate and shape the views of the next academic generation: such dissertation series were often, with the enthusiastic cooperation of the printers, subsequently republished as a single volume under the professor's own name.

Professors also made themselves useful in the print shop, recommending bright young men as correctors and proofreaders (essential for the scholarly languages), finding texts and examining writings submitted to the press for their orthodoxy. The most partisan could exploit this role to act as gatekeepers to publication for aspirant authors or professional rivals; the relationship between Daniel Heinsius and the Elzeviers was only the most glaring example of influence exercised to shape the output of the press. Those who crossed swords with Heinsius, a fine scholar but a mean enemy, bitterly complained that they were subsequently denied the opportunity to publish their books with Leiden's leading firm.

This was particularly resented because scholars cared so much about books: how they looked, who shared their publisher, how the scholarly community perceived them. Some of the Republic's leading scholars were also leading collectors. Now that we have seen how their salary could be augmented very substantially by other sources of income, we can begin to see how they afforded such collections. Gerardus Joannes Vossius in Amsterdam had a particularly fine library, attracting numerous friends and colleagues who wished to borrow one or more titles for study. For a few years Vossius

kept a lending register, noting down the names of lenders and the titles they borrowed – to his chagrin, not all his books eventually made it back to his collection.¹¹ Joseph Justus Scaliger brought with him to Leiden one of the great collections in Oriental languages. On his death, three of his colleagues, including Daniel Heinsius, were allowed to take their choice of the most precious works in his library, turn and turn about, until they had had their fill. The works owned by a great scholar like Scaliger were valued partly for their marginal annotations. When Heinsius himself died in 1656, the works from Scaliger's library were specifically indicated in the catalogue.

The professorial collections presented for auction are almost entirely scholarly, and sometimes exclusively Latinate, apart from a sprinkling of the other scholarly languages. This is not to imply that the deceased professors had no Dutch books; rather, the family had either retained them or disposed of them elsewhere. It is normally assumed that they were not included in the auctions because the sort of buyers likely to attend were only interested in the scholarly titles, but this is probably only half the truth. More pertinently, a serious scholar did not necessarily want to have their private recreational reading habits exposed to view – a title likely to raise an eyebrow or, worse, a disagreeable snigger at the auction was perhaps more conveniently disposed of discreetly, in the bookseller's general stock. When the library contained vernacular titles which cast no discredit on their owner's reputation, such as serious works of theological controversy or travel literature, these would be included in the auction.

Sometimes the urge to build a fine scholarly library went well beyond prudence. Arminius, upon his death, left his wife and seven children in severe financial straits, so selling his library was a necessity. But the rush to realise the value of a scholar's books was in no way regarded as discreditable. For a professor, as was the case for other professional men who built a library, a book collection was a form of pension planning, and indeed the most attractive way to build a substantial cash asset, since the auction market permitted it to be easily liquidated for cash, and the owners could still enjoy its use in their lifetime. Consequently there was no expectation that a scholar would leave their library to the university, though they might be expected to help the library make acquisitions: in Franeker this was a contractual obligation. But the university library could still expect to buy rare and valued volumes from the libraries of its deceased scholars; the astonishing 4,500 gulden invested by the University of Leiden to ensure that Scaliger's books made their way to Leiden with him was doubtless partly justified by the expectation that most of them would never leave.



33 The University of Leiden library, pictured in 1610. This iconic image not only advertised the quality of the Leiden collection, but also acted as a spur to the systematic organisation of other institutional collections.

The sheer scale of these professorial collections also helps explain why the collections of the university libraries were much smaller than one might expect. Nowadays we expect institutional collections to be much bigger than the collection of any individual – in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic the opposite was the case. Twenty-five years after its foundation the University of Leiden library had accumulated only 400 works, though an aggressive acquisition policy increased this very substantially by the 1640s. But this was still no larger than the collection of Daniel Heinsius, and smaller than that of André Rivet, who left almost 5,000 books at his death in 1651. The first published catalogue of the library of Franeker (1601) documents 261 titles in folio and 427 titles in smaller formats, 688 titles in total. By the end of the seventeenth century, fifty years after its foundation, the university library in Harderwijk held no more than 500 books. This can only make sense when we realise that the university library was mainly intended as a resource for consultation by the professors, and its curators would therefore only lay out money to acquire books that the professors

would not be needing to consult on a regular basis – that is, books that would not be in their own collection. In the 1620s, the curators of the Franeker university library took the unusual step of disposing of all its books in smaller formats, to raise funds to buy more folios. Even by the end of the century, when it had accumulated 1,087 folios, the catalogue still only listed 195 books in smaller formats – and it would be smaller formats that would generally be used as class texts. Certainly university libraries were not intended as a resource for students, who generally had access to them only for two hours on two afternoons a week. Students were expected to buy books for their classes, and all the indications are that, despite piteous complaints of penury, this is what they did.

THE BIRTH OF THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

The everyday life of the university generated a large amount of work for the nation's printers. Much of this was the routine work of administration: the announcement of the installation of a rector, obituary notices for distinguished graduates and professors.¹² Proud parents or other friends sometimes celebrated the success of the newly minted graduate by commissioning printed poems of congratulation. Many works of this sort were published as broadsheets, to be posted up on the university's bulletin boards or distributed to attendees. Despite their limited shelf-life, printers lavished considerable care on this sort of work. The University of Groningen owns a large collection of these academic posters, and they show us that occasional pieces of this sort were printed with careful attention to typographical elegance, and often on good-quality paper. Groningen was unusual in not putting all of this official work into the hands of a single printer, so all local publishers could engage in this work (and many did so). The absence of a monopoly may explain the pains with which they approached it.

Universities also took the work of their official printer very seriously: the scope of their duties was defined with some care, and these regulations provide us with some precious detail on both the scope and the nature of academic publishing. In Leiden and Utrecht the printer was required to print 100 copies of each student dissertation; in Groningen 125 was the norm.¹³ A Utrecht ordinance of 1661 stipulated that sixty copies should be handed over to the student, and the remaining forty would be distributed by the beadle, presumably to professors and other distinguished attendees. In Leiden, always conscious of its dignity, the printer was also obliged to print four copies on superior fine paper for the university curators. Interestingly,



34 A spread of seventeenth-century university dissertations from Franeker, Groningen, Utrecht and Harderwijk. Printing for Dutch universities and other institutions of higher education was a steady source of income for Dutch publishers, and helped make presses profitable in many places where otherwise printing would scarcely have been viable.

to accompany each dissertation the Utrecht printers also provided broadsheet advertisements, to be posted up to alert those wishing to attend. None of these survive, and we have only this archival reference to show for what must have been an enormous number of printing jobs, particularly if, as seems very likely, this was also the norm in the larger schools such as Leiden.

Commissions of this sort and other academic ephemera were very welcome for the university printer, but the solid bedrock of academic publishing was the printing of student dissertations. It was this work that made the appointment as university printer such a valuable privilege. Students could not graduate without a public defence of dissertation theses, but this was only one of many occasions on which students exercised the art of disputation, and these practice theses were also often printed, usually as a neat quarto pamphlet of eight or twelve pages. This pamphlet was sometimes also accompanied by a broadsheet summary, which served both as an advertisement for a forthcoming event or as a notepad on which those attending could scribble notes as the discussion wound on.

These dissertation theses, which survive in many thousands of examples, are today among the least regarded of all the books that survive from the seventeenth century. In truth they are not the most thrilling to read, often laborious and respectful discussions of abstruse points of theology, or expounding medical theories now (happily for patients) consigned to the dustbin of clinical practice. It is also by no means always clear whether the theses had been formulated by the student who would defend them or by the professor who presided over the ceremony (the *praeses*). Today these neat little publications attract so little scholarly interest that many libraries have not even catalogued their holdings (and some may even have thrown them away). But this neglect is not wholly justified, because cumulatively they represent the most sustained engagement of the period with many aspects of controversial theology, judicial practice, medical innovation and science. Whereas the scientific discoveries of Johannes Kepler and William Harvey, or the philosophical ideas of René Descartes and Francis Bacon, are rightly celebrated, it is the university dissertations that tell us how swiftly new concepts began to trickle down into the consciousness of the new generation of aspirant scholars and possibly even challenge traditional orthodoxies.

During the course of the seventeenth century, disputations did make a substantial contribution to reshaping academic culture.¹⁴ In the 1640s the Leiden professor Adriaan Heereboord presided over a series of dissertations discussing the merits of Cartesian philosophy.¹⁵ Heereboord was no partisan of Descartes, but this even-handed ventilation of the issues was important in establishing the principle that matters of controversy could safely be debated in the academic context: no mean feat when one considers that the Remonstrant controversy, which had almost ripped Dutch society asunder, was essentially a quarrel between university professors. Heereboord's championing of the *Libertas philosophandi*, the freedom of philosophising, would be influential in defusing other potentially ruinous university quarrels, such as the disputes in Leiden in the 1670s, and prepared the ground for a radical thinker like Baruch de Spinoza. This was all the more ironic when one considers that Descartes himself had been characteristically acerbic about the practice of disputation, which he clearly regarded as archaic: 'Nor have I ever observed that, through the method of disputations practised in the schools, any truth was discovered that until then had been unknown.'¹⁶ Modern scholars have on the whole agreed. But the conventions of disputation – not least the understanding that the propositions advanced did not necessarily represent the opinions of those who proposed the theses

for debate – proved a serviceable mechanism for confronting the critical problem facing the university world: how theology and empirical observation could be reconciled in academic discourse in an age of scientific discovery.

The dissertations were certainly valued in their day; witness the fact that they very often survive today in libraries far distant from the places in which they were first defended. Printers recognised their commercial value. Often when they had fulfilled their obligation to the graduating student to deliver the sixty or one hundred for him to distribute to professors, friends and those attending the defence, the printer would print a further batch. These could then be bound up with twenty or thirty other theses and sold commercially as a compendium, which is how many survive today. Canny professors also saw opportunities to turn a profit by organising their students to defend theses in a sequence focused on a single theme, which were then gathered together in a book to be published in the professor's name.

Now these theses collections are scattered around the world's libraries, so reconstructing the total corpus of the student dissertations published in Leiden, Utrecht and elsewhere has proved quite a task. Thus far, we have traced around 15,000 surviving examples; there are probably at least as many again which have either disappeared or are lost in plain sight, hidden in the cavernous vaults of the uncatalogued collections of their unwilling library owners. The sheer scale of effort printers invested in printing dissertations may never be known, but we can get some idea from what we know of the numbers of students enrolled in the universities. Between 1575 and 1650 more than 21,000 matriculations were recorded at the University of Leiden. This does not equate to a corresponding number of students, since they were required to re-matriculate every year (and some stayed for five years or more); but for our purposes this does not much matter, since we know that many students liked to take part in practice disputations at least once a year, some, indeed, more than this. Samuel Czaplinius took part in six practice dissertations, one in 1602, four in 1603, and one in 1604. The Eastern Europeans seemed particularly keen to get their money's worth, having travelled so far to attend university. But then a young Hollander, Cornelis Burchvliet from Den Briel, defended no fewer than eight sets of theses between 1598 and 1601, including five sets in his last year. The undisputed champion of the practice disputation seems to have been local boy Johannes Arnoldsz Ravens, who defended theses on seventeen occasions between 1600 and 1603. Ravens seems largely to have steered clear of Gomarus, taking most of his exercises with Johannes Kuchlinus, rector

of the college, who for many years struggled valiantly to keep the peace between the warring professors.¹⁷ Ravens did not follow his example: after his departure from the university he became a major polemicist in the Remonstrant cause.

The sheer number of students presenting themselves for practice dissertations put enormous pressure on the academic staff. At Leiden, Gomarus, Arminius and Lucas Trelcatius presided in alternation through many dissertation sequences; in 1609 the university awarded both Gomarus and Arminius an extra 250 gulden for their patient attendance at so many student exercises. In 1606 Gilbert Jack (Jacchaeus), a Scottish professor of physics, received 63 gulden remuneration for presiding over sixty-three disputations, which may give an indication of how many the two senior professors had sat through to earn their reward. The extra funds were all the more welcome as students would frequently dedicate their theses to valued professors, and it was customary to repay the compliment with an appropriate gift. In Amsterdam the practice became so onerous that students were forbidden to dedicate their dissertations to the same patron more than twice a year. All of this was very wearing, but Gomarus was sufficiently touched by these dedications, some inscribed by hand, to add many of these dissertations to his library. After his death they made their way to Ireland in the collection of James Usher, the Archbishop of Armagh, where they remain, now in the Library of Trinity College Dublin, carefully arranged and indexed in Gomarus's neat handwriting.

Students also took the opportunity to dedicate their theses to their home churches, many of which were no doubt sponsoring their studies in Leiden: in the case of our diligent Polish-Lithuanian Samuel Czaplinius, the church at Vilnius. Samuel Bouchereau from Saumur defended three theses in 1602 and three in 1603. His *Theses theologicae de ecclesia Romana* of 1603 were dedicated to six ministers of four different French Huguenot churches. The purpose here was more than just to honour a debt: despatching a printed dissertation to a patron was also an excellent way to demonstrate students' progress in their studies.

So the 21,000 student matriculations recorded before 1650 may well correspond to approximately the same number of dissertation exercises taking place at Leiden during this same period. Of these we know now about 4,000 surviving examples – about one-sixth of the number probably originally printed. With a similar number of students matriculating in the second half of the century, and the other four universities to take into account, an estimate of 60,000 such practice thesis publications for the whole century

may indeed be rather cautious. In addition to the practice dissertations, each university offered elaborate ceremonies on the taking of a degree: there were at least 8,000 such graduation ceremonies in the Dutch Republic's five universities during the course of the century.¹⁸ The theses defended by the successful candidate would again have been published, and printers were also kept busy printing broadsheet announcements of the coming event to be posted up and distributed to friends, sometimes, in the case of the richer or more popular students, with a separate publication of commendatory poems contributed by their friends. Most of these collections of congratulatory poems were quarto pamphlets rather like the dissertations themselves, but occasionally friends splashed out on folios of six or twelve pages. These were often lavish productions, published on rich creamy paper in an ostentatiously large type, but very few survive, not least because they were difficult to store.

This amounts to a mass of print. When we allow for approximately 60,000 practice dissertations and the published ephemera of official business we may plausibly hypothesise not far short of 85,000 different printing tasks undertaken by Dutch printers for the business of higher education. Of the dissertations that have survived, around one thousand were published for theses defended at the illustrious schools, rather than at the five universities: in all we have traced dissertations published in some fifteen different Dutch institutions of higher education. This is an extraordinary contrast with the Southern Netherlands, where Louvain and Douai maintained a functional monopoly of academic learning (and academic publishing). In the course of research for this book we unearthed in Dublin two dissertations from the Theological Academy in Ghent, a short-lived attempt in the early 1580s to set up a Calvinist institution to challenge the resolutely Catholic Louvain. The dissertations were presided over by Lambert Danaeus, sent down from Leiden to lead this missionary venture.¹⁹ But the Theological Academy died when Spanish armies recaptured the city, and Catholic hegemony in the south was restored.

For the Dutch provincial press, the work provided by the local university, or illustrious school, was essential to making a living. In the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic the academic world was now, alongside the city and state government, the second most important institutional customer for the print industry. Take Deventer, in the first age of print one of the most renowned centres of printing. In the year 1640 we know of only two Latin works printed in the city that were not academic dissertations.²⁰ No printer could survive with so little work; it was only the promise of patronage from

the local council and the academic authorities that drew printers to such a place. Groningen, another city with only sporadic work beyond official customers, sustained at times five printing houses, all kept alive by the needs of the university and the state authorities for printed ordinances. Many of the eastern cities boasting a university or illustrious school had at least two printers. This academic work was reliable and regular; it was also, as we will see, well paid. For the Dutch publishing industry outside the major cities it was a lifeline.

STUDY AND SPEND

The cost of printing these dissertations traditionally fell on the graduating student; a tradition that Leiden, with the prestige of its degrees and its relatively affluent clientele, was in a position to maintain. Yet here the Illustrious School at Amsterdam, flush with cash and always keen to take a different path to its pre-eminent neighbour, was again prepared to break new ground. The Amsterdam directors paid for the publication of practice theses, and some of the smaller Dutch universities, competing for students in a crowded market, felt obliged to follow its example. Groningen paid their printer 3 gulden for printing 125 copies of each thesis: if the student wanted more, they had to pay for the extra copies. This fee was later compounded into an annual payment of 150 gulden; this was good money, considering that in Groningen the university printer never enjoyed a monopoly of university printing. The first university printer, Hans Sas, also received a payment of 65 gulden for printing 700 broadsheet copies of the university's foundation charter; clearly this was destined for a wide distribution throughout the Republic and beyond. This was an opportunity for a printer to show their skill with a printed document that would be seen by many discerning eyes in all of Europe's major centres of typography; we can testify to its effectiveness as one copy survives in the archives of Groningen University. Whatever the pains lavished on the assignment this was still good money for a single commission. Utrecht's printers did even better: in the university's first year Petrus and Aegidius Roman were able to bill the university 270 gulden for official academic print.²¹

The price paid to the printers for a single job – the delivery of 100 or 125 copies of a dissertation – was fairly uniform across the five Dutch universities and the illustrious schools, around 4 or 5 gulden. Utrecht undertook to support fifty practice dissertations a year, in addition to those for students graduating. So if a printer received one such job a week, this would already



35 This magnificent poster advertising the new University of Groningen was destined for distribution throughout Europe to attract potential students and aspiring academics. In addition to describing the teaching arrangements, it also laid out the generous perks the city was offering to encourage matriculations.

amount to around 250 gulden a year: a decent bedrock income, particularly when we consider that in the smaller places many of these printers would also have been doing a similar amount of work for the local city council or States.

Printing theses was a gold mine for publishers and students knew this – and resented it. By the time students came to supplicate for their degrees, they had endured several, often many, years of ruinous expense. We have seen that the cost of lodging could be extremely high, and students also had to pay for books, and sometimes private tuition, all the while failing to resist the many temptations to which single young men away from home are inevitably prone. All Dutch university towns, mindful of competition between them, exempted students from the beer excise. One might think that students hardly needed the further incentive of cheap beer for the sort of riotous behaviour that often followed excessive drinking, but when



36 Professors and students spill out of the Leiden Academy building after a promotion. Presumably the curious bystanders are not invited to the festive drinking that will inevitably follow.

Utrecht, fed up with the ensuing damage, withdrew the beer privilege, enrolment fell so precipitately that it was swiftly reinstated. In Harderwijk, tucked away on the Gelderland coast, the annual allowance that a student might enjoy tax free was an eye-watering 270 bottles of wine and 6 barrels of beer. Granted, in a small and remote town like Harderwijk time might hang heavy, especially in winter, but such a limit must have been established with the graduation ceremony in mind – at least one hopes so. For professors, presumably with respect to their obligation to provide hospitality, the allowance was double this.²²

If students survived this obstacle course of temptation and financial housekeeping, the joy of the graduation ceremony was inevitably tempered by the burden of further necessary expenditure. Students were obliged by tradition to express their gratitude to the institution and their professors, and friends would want to mark the day with lavish toasting – all, of course, at the expense of the happy graduand. In 1648 the senate of the University

of Franeker charged 18 gulden for a doctoral examination, and 40 gulden for the doctoral title. In all, the costs of promoting could reach 100 gulden if one included costs of dinner, gifts and the procession.²³ This was three months' salary for a minister, and a painful burden on parents determined to celebrate the undoubted achievements of a much-loved son. But perhaps a student at Franeker was getting off lightly. In Frankfurt-an-der-Oder in north-eastern Germany, the cost of the promotion ceremonies might reach five times the annual salary of a local minister.²⁴

It was no wonder that only a few of those who attended university to study theology supplicated for a degree. Given that ministers were appointed to their charges by the church authorities, after a separate examination of their competence and orthodoxy, there was, strictly speaking, no specific benefit in being armed with a degree. It was very different in professions such as law and medicine, where a degree was an essential entry qualification: 94 per cent of the degrees awarded by Dutch universities before 1700 were in these two subjects.²⁵ Here the anticipated earnings of these two professions (as today) could justify the high costs of obtaining a qualification; indeed the high costs served the additional purpose of restricting entry to these professions to those from more affluent social backgrounds.²⁶ Still, there were limits, and sometimes the festivities got out of hand. Another German university, Halle, felt obliged to limit the numbers attending the post-promotion *conbibium* to 300. The financial burdens of this festive tradition must have put a strain on the resources of even Leiden's aristocratic high rollers.

From the first days of the mediaeval colleges, students have combined a susceptibility to excessive behaviour with a self-pitying sense that the resulting calamitous debt was someone else's fault. In the seventeenth century much of this resentment was directed against the printers. All over Europe, students complained that publishers charged too much for printing their dissertations, and that the workmanship was shoddy and inaccurate. In Leiden these complaints rained down on the broad backs of the Elzeviers. Having established a reputation for parsimony in their relationships with the local professors, they were unlikely to be any more generous to their student clients, and so it proved. The profits from publishing thousands of student dissertations, all paid for by the graduating candidates, were too valuable. While the Elzeviers made their reputation printing Galileo, they made their profits printing theses.

In the case of Abraham and Bonaventura Elzevier, the further accusation of shoddy workmanship was unfounded. Examining several hundred of their dissertation pamphlets confirms that the Elzeviers never deviated from

their normal standard of professional competence. It was only in the last quarter of the century that things took a turn for the worse, when the press was inherited by the younger Abraham, a practising lawyer and alderman of Leiden, so a person of some importance. For Abraham the press was a cash-cow rather than a full-time occupation. His dissertation publications are certainly nicely produced in a large quarto format with generous margins, decoration, large initial letters and polished paragraph divisions. They exhibit higher production standards than the earlier dissertations, probably because Abraham was catering to a more moneyed clientele. The criticisms are more likely to be justified on grounds of cost than quality – these lavishly framed pages would have been very attractive for the moneyed elite, but perhaps less welcome for students struggling to make ends meet. When the insistent complaints forced the regents to investigate, Abraham's insouciant response was that he had abandoned correcting the proofs because the students did not want this. Ultimately, such neglect damaged the university as well as the aggrieved students. When Abraham died in 1712 and the Elzevier firm folded, the university decreed that henceforth students could take their business where they chose. The liquidation of the firm included a fire sale of the typographical materials, including the famous Erpenius Oriental types. The stock of the press amounted to sixty-four fonts of type, an astonishing 5,890 kilos of lead: many of the leading Leiden firms of the early eighteenth century were among the buyers.²⁷ The Hebrew, Syriac and Ethiopic types were now a bit shop-worn, but still a remarkable monument to the ambitions of the University of Leiden and the Dutch contribution to research in the ancient languages over three generations.

Despite the rapacity of the university printers, students often accumulated substantial collections of books. In Leiden large book auctions had to take place outside university terms, so that students would not abandon their lectures to attend them.²⁸ Student collections are more difficult to reconstruct than those of lawyers or ministers who died after a long life of collecting. Students who chose to sell their books when they left the university (which many did, rather than carry them to an uncertain next destination) seldom owned a collection of sufficient size to be auctioned separately. For those scholars who chose instead to hang on to their books, it is difficult to distinguish – in a collection assembled during a lifetime of collecting – which books were bought when the owner was a student. In Groningen, departing students had the right to add their books to any forthcoming sale, a practice that no doubt facilitated the swift circulation of books back into the hands of students about to embark on the same courses. So auction

catalogues are not as revealing for student buying habits as they are for those who went on to a career in the church or state administration. But we can learn a lot from a different set of records, the dockets of the Leiden authorities charged with authorising forthcoming auctions. Here we frequently see mention of the collection of students who needed to sell their books because they could not otherwise pay their debts, or had left Leiden, or even tragically died. This was more frequent than one might expect, sometimes because some students lingered in Leiden for the best part of ten years.

These records confirm that students represented an important and lucrative part of the book market. They also established, during their student years, a habit of book buying that would often stay with them for their whole lives. For a young man of 16 who had just left home, to sit at the feet of one of the Republic's greatest scholars, and then to be able to go out and buy the great man's works, was an extraordinary introduction to the adult world of scholarship. This experience would be influential in shaping generations of ministers, doctors, lawyers and officials, and through them the intellectual culture of the state.

CHAPTER EIGHT



The Men on the Cushions

IN 1669, THE PRINTER to the States General and States of Holland, Hillebrant II van Wouw, decided to resign his position. This must have come as a shock to his employers, since the office of States Printer had been in his family for over seventy-five years. True, this was a demanding charge, as the printer had to be available at all hours to print off official orders, a proclamation or the announcement of some great naval victory. Van Wouw, like his father and mother before him, had profited greatly from his office; he was now one of the richest citizens of The Hague. But he believed he would be richer still if only the States would pay their debts.

In 1661 Hillebrant had submitted to his employers an invoice for 60,000 gulden owed to him for work he had accomplished on their behalf.¹ This was an enormous sum, and the clearest possible evidence of the phenomenal amount of work now generated by official business. For the States General, though the highest legal body in the land, was only one of a multitude of jurisdictions in the Dutch Republic issuing ordinances and proclamations, along with the numerous forms, notices and advertisements generated by the administration of government. Thus far, we have identified over one hundred towns, state governments or quasi-official bodies that at some point in the century published ordinances. All of them required a printer.

Appointment as an official printer to a municipality, a local university or States government, was the kind of work most printers coveted. The tasks consisted of very short texts, a pamphlet or single-sheet broadsheet that would never occupy more than one or two days on the press. And the entire job was paid for by a single client (if not always promptly, as in the case of Hillebrant van Wouw). There was none of the complex business connected with the sale of a normal book, placing stock with booksellers, sending consignments out of town, making arrangements for receiving payments, chasing up defaulters. Hillebrant van Wouw resigned his post because he could afford to. He would spend the rest of his life managing his property investments; five years later, in 1674, his taxable wealth was assessed at 226,500 gulden.

A republic generates its own pomp and circumstance, and the new Dutch state was no exception. When the States General came together, the representatives sat and spoke in a traditional order, their substantial frames supported through the courtly discussions by well-padded seats. The men on the cushions now deliberated carefully before they announced Van Wouw's replacement. Naturally, there was no shortage of candidates, and several printers well established in the local book trade lobbied for the job. In the event the choice fell on a relative newcomer, Jacobus Scheltus: perhaps after Van Wouw the dignified gentlemen preferred to deal with someone who would be more malleable and eager to please. At the same time, they made a decision that would substantially expand his already considerable obligations. The regents decreed that any official document or letter required in more than four copies would henceforth be printed, rather than circulated as a handwritten copy. This extraordinary regulation, unprecedented in any country and never to our knowledge followed elsewhere, would mean that even documents required for relatively restricted circulation, such as the despatches of the nation's foreign ambassadors, would now be printed.² A report circulated only to the twenty-four delegates at the States General would now have to be printed. The regents were well aware that this provision could further imperil confidential discussions: if a document was especially sensitive, Scheltus was not permitted to leave his shop while it was on the press, and was required to deliver it personally by hand to the Griffier.

The new printer took the hint. The family Van Wouw had run a large diverse printing shop, with plenty of books for the general trade. Scheltus decided that he would take no work beyond his official obligations. This would undoubtedly keep his shop busy enough, given the vast expansion of the reach of the state, and the mounting tide of circulating missives, orders and memoranda. All this would now be committed to print. And in due course, once Scheltus had paid off the 4,500 gulden he was obliged to find to buy Van Wouw's equipment and the rights to reprint past ordinances, Scheltus too would become a rich man.

THE RISE OF THE STADSDRUKKER

The States of Holland had been in open rebellion against royal (that is Spanish) authority since 1572. The province had withstood a furious assault throughout 1573 and 1574, and from 1576 onwards no Habsburg army would set foot in the province again. Amsterdam, the last bastion of Habsburg loyalty in Holland, would attach itself to the rebel cause in 1578.

While war raged on in Flanders, Brabant and many other provinces in the Low Countries, Holland's frontier was secured.

During the 1570s the States of Holland developed a pronounced sense of their own authority.³ The administration and political framework of the States were hurriedly reformed. Twelve new cities gained the right of a seat in the States (for a total of eighteen cities); the States began to meet regularly, and appointed committees for the daily business of the province. A provincial admiralty was established; a university was founded; and an elaborate system of finance was introduced to fund the defences of the province and assist the rebel cause elsewhere.⁴ Traditionally, cities had been left to organise their own municipal excise rates and the goods for which they were charged, but the States of Holland resolved to organise the collection of the excise centrally. From the end of 1574, the cities of Holland were required to deliver two-thirds of their excise revenue to a provincial pool, which would be used to pay for the defence of the province and later the liberation of other provinces. In 1583 this centralised system led to the introduction of the *gemene middelen* (general means). The general means was a series of municipal excise taxes on staple goods such as grain, butter, beer, cheese, meat, wine, salt, soap, peat, textiles and for the use of the scales in a weighing house.

Naturally, this mass of regulation and tax-raising created a massive burden of law-making and administration. Recognising this, in 1577 the States of Holland decided to hire their own printer. The successful candidate was to serve contractually as an employee of the States, and he was to guarantee to 'print and publish' all 'histories, books, placards, ordinances and other material, in whatever language as the aforementioned States desire', whenever he was instructed to do so.⁵

The States already had in mind a suitable candidate: Willem Silvius, one of the most prominent publishers in Antwerp, the great print centre of northern Europe. On 8 June 1577 Silvius was officially appointed as the first printer of the States of Holland and of its newly founded University of Leiden.⁶ He was granted an annual stipend of 300 gulden (roughly equivalent in this period to the salary of a Reformed minister or a schoolmaster), together with 2,400 gulden for the transport of his business and the purchase of new typographical material. This offer Silvius took up gratefully; the new appointment provided an opportunity to leave the chaos of Antwerp, its commerce scarcely recovered from the infamous sack by mutinous troops in 1576, the so-called Spanish Fury. The generous contract provided a means to start anew.

In employing Silvius, the States of Holland were motivated by the uncertainty of their own legitimacy. Before the revolt, the States functioned as an advisory body, called upon when the crown requested funding for its campaigns. In 1581 the rebel States would pass the Act of Abjuration, in which they formally abandoned the sovereignty of the King of Spain. Now that the States found themselves in new political waters, there emerged an acute concern to realise their claims to power. In order to function as a sovereign body, the States had to demonstrate their authority. By attracting Silvius, the States made a determined step to place themselves at the centre of the public sphere.

The collapse of Habsburg authority in the 1570s tested the civic communities of the Low Countries as never before. Whether loyalist or rebel, all cities and towns in the Low Countries experienced their share of crisis, destruction and change. Some suffered more than others: the sacking of Mechelen, Zutphen, Naarden, Aalst and Antwerp devastated urban communities. The exhausting sieges imposed upon Haarlem, Alkmaar, Leiden, Ghent, Antwerp and other cities challenged their social and economic resilience, compounded by an influx of refugees and garrison troops. Magistrates everywhere were required to reinforce their own authority as leaders of the civic community.

The crisis in the cities prompted an expansion of municipal regulation. Urban communities were disrupted by thousands of refugees, most of whom would not have been familiar with established bylaws, regulations and privileges. Reformed exile communities in Germany and England numbered over 20,000 Netherlanders by the early 1570s – almost all of whom flocked to liberated cities in Holland and Zeeland later in the decade.⁷ Destruction caused by the iconoclasm of 1566 or the subsequent military engagements required repair and reconstruction. Plague, poverty and famine exacerbated these problems. The pressures of war, poverty and political crisis forced magistrates to expand their presence in the civic community. The archive of the city of Leiden presents a remarkable resource that allows us to reconstruct the involvement of the magistrates in the regulation of their city: the *Aflezingsboeken* (*Proclamation Books*). In the *Aflezingsboeken* the city's secretary entered the text of all regulations and ordinances proclaimed by the magistrates; the series starts in 1505 and ends in 1794.⁸ The sixteenth-century *Aflezingsboeken* reveal that between 1505 and 1560 the magistrates issued around twenty to twenty-five proclamations a year, an average of two a month. From 1566, there was a rapid increase in the total number of annual proclamations. In 1573 and 1574, when Leiden was subjected to two



37 Jan van Hout, secretary of Leiden city council, conducts the annual reading of the statutes of the textile industry of the city from the balustrade at Leiden city hall. Van Hout was also the founder of the famous Leiden city press.

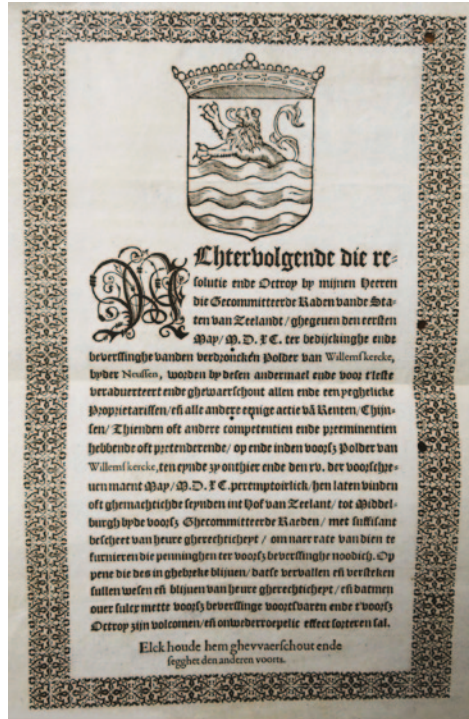
sieges, the magistrates made 375 proclamations – more than one every other day. They sought to improve fire safety, regulate the distribution of bread, control market prices, organise the city watch and, above all, reassure citizens and ease the tensions within the city walls.⁹

Before the siege of Leiden, the magistrates had never printed ordinances or other municipal announcements. But between December 1574 and the end of the sixteenth century they would issue at least 313 publications. In all likelihood these surviving ordinances represent only a portion of the publications issued in the magistrates' name during this period. And what we see in Leiden was repeated in cities throughout Holland and the Republic. This led to a vast expansion in both printing and the office of the *stadsdrukker*, the official printer of the municipality. Most of the Holland cities found their *stadsdrukker* in the exodus of book trade personnel from the south to the north. *Stadsdrukkers* appointed in Haarlem, Gouda, Enkhuizen, Franeker, Middelburg, Zwolle, Rotterdam, Alkmaar, Dordrecht and Woerden all came from printing centres in the Southern Netherlands.¹⁰ The first printers from the south to settle in towns like Haarlem, Arnhem, Enkhuizen and Gouda were immediately appointed as *stadsdrukkers* by the magistrates. Most were handsomely rewarded with stipends and privileges. Abraham van den Rade, appointed *stadsdrukker* in Leeuwarden, received an annual salary of 50 gulden, in addition to freedom from excise and militia duties. The first

Haarlem *stadsdrukkers* received similar salaries and freedoms. While an annual salary of 40 or 50 gulden was certainly not enough to eke out a living, the freedom from excise was a very welcome privilege in an era when consumption taxes represented a heavy burden on an urban household. At the same time, the *stadsdrukker* received compensation for municipal orders alongside his salary, and he was also likely to receive privileges to supply the town council with paper, ink and books.

The appointment of *stadsdrukkers* quickly became a trend throughout the Dutch Republic, and the provision of an annual salary and freedom from excise or militia duty became a new norm. Jasper Tournay, appointed *stadsdrukker* of Gouda in 1608, did not initially receive an annual stipend: in 1613 he complained to the magistrates that in his previous capacity as *stadsdrukker* of Enkhuizen he received a stipend of 50 gulden and freedom from militia duty. He also noted that the *stadsdrukker* of nearby Schiedam received at least 30 gulden annually. By the start of the seventeenth century the presence of a local printer, tied to the local municipal regents, was a new standard of political society. In more than twenty-five towns magistrates could rely on a local printer to produce broadsheets, forms and other ordinances. The *stadsdrukker* had become a ubiquitous feature of the urban landscape.

The rebel provinces also hurried to secure a suitably qualified printer to facilitate the conduct of their business. Here the appointment of Silvius in Holland set a standard that other provinces were eager to follow. In 1581 Willem Jansz van Campen became the printer for the States of Gelderland, located in Arnhem. Four years later, Gillis van den Rade was appointed printer of the States of Friesland and the newly established University of Franeker. He was granted an annual salary of 200 gulden on condition that he would print anything ordered by the States or the university, and that he would donate a free copy of every book he printed to both institutions.¹¹ The individuals appointed by the provincial assemblies were offered carefully measured inducements. The States of Zeeland handsomely rewarded the Fleming Richard Schilders to move to Middelburg from London (where he had settled in exile) to become their designated printer.¹² The States of Utrecht, which wished to appoint Salomon de Roy after the death of Hendrick van Borculo in 1586, had to bargain hard.¹³ The States of Gelderland had recently lost their printer, Willem Jansz van Campen, and wished to entice De Roy to move to Arnhem from Utrecht, offering him free rent and freedom from excise. The States of Utrecht had to promise De Roy a one-off payment of 150 gulden, to be paid in two instalments, to persuade him to stay in Utrecht.



38 An early example of the proclamations issued in the rebel provinces. This Middelburg printer went to considerable trouble to invest this process with typographical dignity.

This was a new world for printers, courted for their skills and for the dignity their trade brought to the new state. Albrecht Hendricksz, printer of the States of Holland since 1582 and of the States General from 1590, was valued so greatly by the local regents that he was appointed an alderman of The Hague in 1598, a post usually reserved for the upper layer of the urban elite.¹⁴ Two years later, in 1600, Hendricksz became a burgomaster of The Hague, the first printer in the Low Countries to reach this distinguished position, and arguably the highest to which one could aspire in a Dutch city.

FROM THE COUNCIL CHAMBER TO THE STREET

By the second decade of the seventeenth century, the new Dutch state had put in place the infrastructure of what would be the most sophisticated network of state communication anywhere in Europe. Yet all of this was achieved without resolving the fundamental constitutional problems of a state that had emerged from rebellion, and been shaped and defined by the

exigencies of war. How did you organise a country without a hereditary ruler and without a constitution, especially when each individual province brought with it historical precedents (which the Dutch usually referred to as their liberties) that were much more helpful for opposition than for creative action? The first years of the new Republic, still locked in a struggle for survival with Spain, left little room for resolving these sorts of questions. To an extent, these were problems that had no solution: the Dutch Republic had come together as a loose association of seven provinces, where one, Holland, was dominant. It recognised a huge debt of gratitude to the House of Orange for their leadership, but not their right to rule. The whole history of the Republic would involve negotiating between a mass of competing jurisdictions and balancing rival interests.

In one sentiment, at least, the ruling elites were in agreement: that the burdens of government should be shouldered entirely by those qualified by rank and experience – that is, themselves. The Dutch Republic was not a democratic state. It was ruled over by oligarchic regents from the wealthiest urban communities who reserved the right to make policy without consulting their citizens. Membership of the patrician regent class was exclusive, largely determined by co-option. This was, in principle, a self-contained world. The regents made policy behind closed doors, deliberating until consensus was reached. The delegates at the provincial States then reported back to their peers, not to their citizens. They acknowledged no need to explain political decision-making to their social inferiors.

This conception of an enlightened bourgeois despotism was upheld with the usual sense of weary *noblesse oblige* by those destined to rule. Jacob Cats, Grand Pensionary of Holland in the 1620s, 1630s and 1640s, declared that government must be independent of public opinion. His successor, the brilliant Johan de Witt, claimed that the state should pay no heed to public perceptions of authority. In the words of one knowledgeable contemporary commentator: ‘the regents (by the Lord God appointed as little Gods) are to rule over the people as fathers, and the subjects are to obey them and follow their bidding.’¹⁵

This remark was penned in 1644, as part of the preface to the first collected volume of the ordinances of the States General. Its author was the publisher of this mighty folio, the Amsterdam printer Johannes Janssonius. The irony is that he, of all people, was in a position to know the folly of these words. The texts he here reprinted offered many examples of the precise opposite, of a regent class keen to consult, explain and justify any new law: indeed the texts of many of these ordinances laid out with some care the

process by which laws had been made or amended, often after direct representations from the citizenry. The men on the cushions might have enjoyed the conceit of their power to rule (should they only be able to agree among themselves). But in practice they were all too aware that their place at the summit of Dutch society relied on the good opinion of the wider population: a population both politically informed and voluble. The people may not have had votes, but they certainly had opinions; and their good word could make or break any administration.

A recognition of the subtlety of this relationship is crucial to understanding why the regents devoted such time and attention to communicating with the citizenry. The Dutch Republic developed a network of public information unrivalled in Europe, and unparalleled in its sophistication. This network built on an established tradition of the verbal communication of law, in which print played at first an auxiliary role.

By the middle of the fifteenth century, most cities in Europe had an established routine for the promulgation of law. New ordinances and regulations were promulgated orally from a central location: in the case of Venice, a raised pedestal on St Mark's Square, directly outside the cathedral. Dutch cities chose a similarly strategic point. The Haarlem magistrates made their announcement from a first-storey window of the town hall – more comfortable in winter than an outside podium. Bells were rung to signal an impending proclamation, and allow a crowd to gather. In Leiden the magistrates chose an elevated exterior stairway in front of the town hall. This was strategically sited on the Breestraat, the houses opposite providing a fine acoustic chamber, shielded from the noise of the market on the reverse side of the building.

The authorities were of course aware that they could never hope to reach their intended audience with one single public announcement. Not everyone would be there to hear the first proclamation: in cities like Haarlem or Leiden, with populations of 40,000, it would in any case have been physically impossible for them all to gather. So many cities established a routine perambulation, which took the herald, accompanied by drums or trumpets, to all the major points of the city. In Florence, a rich city where the communication of information was crucial to both commerce and social order, a team of heralds quartered the city between them, riding on horseback to shout the latest news in every major thoroughfare.¹⁶ Dutch municipal authorities also made liberal use of town criers to disseminate further their proclamations. In Vlissingen the magistrates employed a court bailiff (*gerechtsbode*) to proclaim ordinances throughout the city, for which he was

paid 5 stuivers per ordinance.¹⁷ The town crier of Kampen was paid 1 gulden for the proclamation of an ordinance, four times as much as the *gerechtsbode* in Vlissingen. In addition to his regular fee, the Kampen town crier also received a salary of 36 gulden per year, and 7 gulden for his official uniform.¹⁸ In 1638 the Groningen town crier Ubbe Pieters received a salary of 28 gulden, 2 stuivers and 4 penningen, and he too was supplied with appropriate clothing.¹⁹ This was a crucial aspect of the position. The town crier, like bailiffs, officers of the guard, weigh masters, trumpeters and horn blowers, had to stand out in the urban landscape: he was, by privilege of his office, an extension of the magistrates' authority.

Seventeenth-century registers of civic employees reveal that most Dutch magistrates employed town criers, but the city accounts, as here, tell us more about their remuneration than what precisely was expected of them. Happily, the town archives of Leeuwarden yield a detailed account of the town crier's duties. Leeuwarden, capital of Friesland, was a town of approximately 15,000 inhabitants. Here the town crier was required to read municipal proclamations at forty-eight locations throughout the city. Since each location was specified in the instruction, this has allowed us to recreate the route taken by the town crier on his rounds through the city. Almost all proclamations were made on squares, bridges or crossroads. The stops included notable locations like the weigh house, the city hall, several marketplaces and churches; but the town crier also found himself on narrow streets in busy residential or commercial quarters of the city. The crier sometimes stopped only 50 yards from his previous stop, and several times retraced his steps or crisscrossed his previous route, which would allow citizens who missed the announcement to catch up or listen again. For an hour or two each day, the whole city was his theatre.

The town crier was accompanied by a drum, which would announce his arrival at every stop. In other cities, we know that town criers were announced by trumpeters, bell ringers, horn blowers and pipers. So when the town crier of Leeuwarden set off on his tour, the entire city would be drummed or piped out of bed and onto the street or leaning on their window sills to hear what he had to say. All this required a considerable effort (and lung-power) on the part of the town crier, but he was at least well remunerated for his efforts. Between November and May the crier would receive 5 gulden and 13 stuivers for each municipal proclamation, and 3 gulden and 3 stuivers during the summer months. His winter's salary for a single proclamation was the equivalent of a week's labour for most citizens. But he had to work hard for the money. The magistrates were clearly suspicious that in cold

weather, or when public interest in the proclamation seemed to be low, the crier might be inclined to stint his duties. So the regulation laid down that for each location which he skipped he would be fined 6 stuivers.

The authorities also relied on the church to aid the process of communication. In cities Reformed ministers were sometimes instructed to proclaim secular ordinances at the end of service, when they had a captive audience. In the countryside the assistance of ministers was essential. In rural Drenthe, in the north-east of the country, a provincial ordinance instructed all preachers that they must:

ensure that their flock stays in church until the service has ended, and that after grace all publications concerning tax and other worldly matters will be read in church: and all preachers are hereby ordered . . . to read clearly, distinctly and in their entirety all placards, regulations, resolutions, ordinances, official letters, affixed notations, &c., so that the intentions of the government may be better known and understood.²⁰

To promote the efficiency of state communication in rural areas, proclamations read out in church were often repeated for several weeks. Groningen preachers in the countryside generally proclaimed secular ordinances at three successive weekly services.

In cities or country villages, this traditional vision of state communication was one still dominated by the spoken word. This continued to hold its place even in the age of print: by custom and practice, a law had no validity unless it had formally been proclaimed. But municipal and regional authorities of the Dutch Republic also made extensive use of print to reinforce their communication strategies. Not everyone would have heard the proclamation, even if it was carefully reiterated around the streets. With the passage of years, ordinances also became increasingly complex. It was self-evidently unsatisfactory that citizens should be forced to rely on oral transmission for a list of new tax rates, or recalibration in the prices permitted for meat, beer or bread. Nor would you want to rely on a neighbour or the seller to pass on this information. For this sort of new regulation, the confirmation of print was an increasing necessity.

In 1657, the Amsterdam publisher Jan Hendricksz reflected that it was widely known that in the past 'our fatherland was not governed by printed and publicly affixed laws'.²¹ Indeed, Dutch authorities had rarely, if ever, used print before the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt, not yet a century earlier. We have to remember that in the first age of print, printed information was

for a long time considered the least credible form of news, much less easily trusted than a private communication from or conversation with a trusted friend.²² Yet by the mid-seventeenth century, authorities across the Dutch Republic had placed printed placards, forms, fliers and pamphlets at the heart of their administration.

This prompted the establishment of a new municipal office, parallel to that of the town crier: the *stadsaanplakker* or public affixer. Here, again, we were fortunate to unearth one detailed regulation for the duties of this officer, in this case for Haarlem. Twice a day, at 11 a.m. and 4 p.m., he was to present himself at the city hall on the market square to see whether there was anything to post up. The fact that he had to make himself available so often indicates that ordinances could be expected every day. Once the *stadsaanplakker* had picked up his broadsheets, he set off on a tour of the city, no doubt accompanied by a couple of young helpers to carry the stack of broadsheets and the municipal gluepot. The first two copies were posted on the city hall itself; then the affixer had to post up broadsheets on the gates of the city, the doors of all churches, the walls of the weigh house and the headquarters of the militia. There were ten gates in seventeenth-century Haarlem, and at least six churches. In addition, the affixer would, while on his route, post up additional broadsheets on 'the corners of the streets in and outside the city where it is common to affix posters'. This was a very common phrase, which we encounter all too often: but in the case of Haarlem we can see that the posting of official broadsheets was as meticulous and thorough as the itinerary of the Leeuwarden town crier. It would have taken well over an hour to complete, more if curious citizens button-holed him to enquire what was going on, or to cadge a copy of a broadsheet that particularly concerned them.

There is much we do not know, and cannot recover about this world of pasted up notices, ordinances and regulations. Few cities kept a file copy of all the ordinances they issued. Printers sometimes kept file copies, but only in the case of the Antwerp firm of Plantin have these copies survived. So there is undoubtedly a vast lost hinterland of ordinances, tax forms, advertisements and commercial fliers which were never preserved. Paper was still a reasonably precious commodity, and there were plenty of other household uses to which second-hand paper could be put. But enough of these ordinances do survive to allow us to see the care which was lavished on ensuring that these printed regulations were both striking and impressive. The publications issued by Dutch authorities were designed to stand out amid the hustle and bustle of urban life. Broadsheet placards were usually around 40

by 30 cm in size, roughly the dimensions of modern A3 paper. They were composed using a large black letter typeface, generally including an arresting woodcut initial. Roman or cursive typefaces were used to emphasise certain words, phrases or transitions in the text. At the header of the broadsheets one would often find a woodcut of the coat of arms of the issuing jurisdiction, reinforcing the official status of the ordinance. Most imposingly, the municipal broadsheet contained spacious margins, exposing significant white space. In an age when paper was expensive (and largely determined the price of a book), the liberal use of white space was a sign of luxury; it marked out the broadsheet ordinance as a distinguished text. The white space also helped the placard stand out amid other texts affixed on walls or doors in the city.

Printed ordinances were not only practical texts, but political symbols which reflected directly on the reputation of the urban community and its rulers. When Jan van Dockum became *stadsdrukker* in Den Bosch in 1641, he was appointed on the condition that his press would do justice to the prestige of the city. The printers chosen as *stadsdrukkers* were well-established publishers, able to invest in quality typefaces and capable of executing complex print jobs. To their credit, it is clear that Dutch *stadsdrukkers* lived up to these expectations. Reading through thousands of surviving examples, it is rare to find composition or printing errors on seventeenth-century ordinances. For the printers appointed, this was important work – not only for their annual income, but as a measure of status.

Of course, not all the regulations issued by the town would be welcomed by the citizenry. News of an additional tax levy seldom warms the heart, and regulations that protected some citizens disadvantaged others. Sometimes citizens would take direct action to signal their discontent. The distinctive features of municipal ordinances made them easy to recognise, but also made them a target for mockery, anger and dissent. The placard embodied the implementation of rule: to affix it was a demonstration of power, to rip it down was to challenge authority. While legislation was issued in the privacy of the council chamber, once it was displayed on the streets of the city the law was at the mercy of its citizens. In March 1686 the magistrates of Groningen were forced to post a militiaman next to each copy of an affixed placard calling for the arrest of a corrupt receiver of the treasury, who evidently had many friends in the city. The *Courante uyt Italien*, the weekly Dutch newspaper published from 1618 onwards, reported in January 1631 on a very public struggle in the village of Standdaarbuiten, west of Breda, on the border between the Dutch Republic and the Southern Netherlands:

The honourable gentlemen of the States of Holland affixed a placard on the church of *Standdaarbuiten*, ordering that no papists would be allowed to hold their service there on pain of a serious fine. [But then] a papist ripped off the placard and performed a service; the same papist then had a price declared on his head and became a fugitive, until the [Habsburg] governor of Breda sent around 300 cavalry and 300 infantry [to the village] with the papist, whom they installed in the church, and then affixed a placard, that nobody will be allowed to molest the papist.²³

In this case placards were, quite literally, a weapon of war. Even in Haarlem, the *stadsaanplakker* had the ironic but regular duty of pasting up placards which prohibited citizens from ripping down, defacing or destroying placards. One was proclaimed in 1637; another in 1640; and another in 1643.

These sorts of tensions were a natural part of civic life. The magistrates were aware that all laws required a certain level of consent; and this was more likely if they could demonstrate that a measure of community solidarity lay behind their deliberations. Despite their formal exclusion from policy-making, citizens were deeply involved in the formulation of law. In Amsterdam, every week three of the nine aldermen of the city were required to arrive early at the city hall to read and process petitions, many of which contained requests for new or updated legislation. These petitions were carefully weighed. In each published ordinance, the first part of the text was given over to a careful explanation of the genesis of the law. Sometimes this would explain the external pressures that made recourse to new taxation necessary. More often than not the pressure for new legislation came from nearer home. Remonstrances from merchants, butchers, skippers, officers of the guard, deacons of the tanners' guild, or other citizens were commonly cited as the reason for a new ordinance. This example, taken from the opening of an Amsterdam ordinance of 16 September 1670, could stand for many:

As our gentlemen of the magistracy have found from the multiple complaints of the ordinary bakers that their [production] costs are growing daily due to the increase of the wages of the millers, the expense of the purchase of grain, the rise in the wages of their apprentices, the sluice tolls imposed on each grain barge, and many other heavy burdens, leading to the observable deterioration of their livelihood and sustenance: it is for this reason that our aforementioned gentlemen seek to

ameliorate the same, and have issued and ordered, as they do hereby: that from now on the bakers will enjoy for their price of each sack of white bread . . .²⁴

Apart from providing a reason for the introduction of new legislation, these justifications also presented the authorities with a means to demonstrate that they were indeed listening to members of the community. To an extent it worked. Dutch citizens complained, not that there were too many laws, but that the laws were not effectively enforced. In December 1600 Anthonis Duyck, public prosecutor of the Dutch Council of State, wrote in his journal that ‘many people feel that there is no lack of ordinances’, but that the States General ‘have not made enough efforts to maintain’ the ordinances they have already published.²⁵ By the middle of the century, the effective management of Dutch society relied increasingly on print. For those printers lucky enough to obtain a contract to work for the local municipality, the profits were potentially enormous.

THE MUNICIPAL GOLD MINE

The use of print for state communication was a Europe-wide development of the time, but what made it exceptional in the decentralised Dutch Republic was the unusual number of authorities that began to print announcements and ordinances on a regular basis. Thus far, we have been able to identify 108 jurisdictions in the Dutch Republic that issued printed publications in the seventeenth century, including seventy-nine different municipalities. They include the most prominent cities of the country, but also much smaller towns, like Wijk bij Duurstede, Veere, Appingedam, Schoonhoven and Medemblik – even villages like Amstelveen and Grijskerke, with less than a thousand inhabitants. The provincial and regional assemblies of the country, courts and the East and West India companies also published printed ordinances. The extent to which these authorities used printed ordinances naturally varies. The magistrates of the cities of Groningen or Utrecht had to communicate with an audience of 20,000 or 30,000 citizens, whereas those of Weesp had only 2,000. Some of the smaller municipalities did not have a local printing press, but employed printers elsewhere. The magistrates of the small Zeeland town of Tholen had their ordinances printed in Middelburg. The regulations of the Vlaardingen orphanage were printed in Delft; those of Grootebroek in Enkhuizen; and those of Edam even further afield, in The Hague. Better



39 An announcement of the Alkmaar cattle and horse market. Cities around the Republic went to considerable efforts to promote their local markets, making extensive use both of posters like this and of newspaper advertisements.

to have the job done well, by an experienced printer, than by an under-capitalised business in their own community.

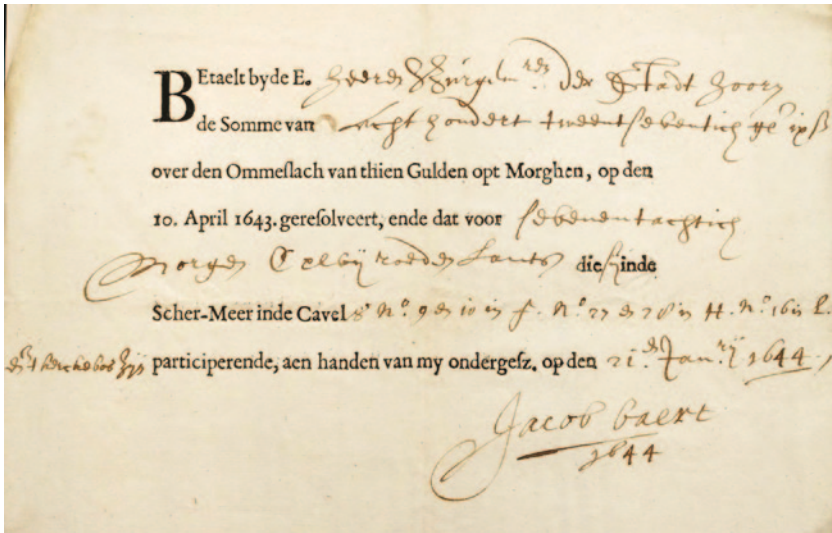
The larger cities issued ordinances on a regular basis: certainly in excess of fifty or seventy a year. It is hard to be too precise because so many of these publications were not preserved. A systematic search of city and state archives has unearthed precious survivors, but these will only be the tip of the iceberg. Fortunately, we have other ways to reconstruct what was clearly a vast market. Some cities kept old-fashioned ordinance books, in which each new regulation was carefully inscribed. We can compare these books with surviving examples of printed regulations. Another significant source of information is the municipal account books, in which magistrates record payments to printers for their ordinances. It is here that we get a true sense of the astonishing amount of work generated for the local printers.

In large cities like Haarlem and Leiden, the printers responsible for municipal ordinances were usually paid around 300 gulden per year, while

a printer to the regional States, such as Symon Moulert in Middelburg, who printed for the States of Zeeland, received 400 or 500 gulden. Payments are generally opaque, referring not only to the printing of ordinances, but also to the delivery of books, paper, pens, ink and other stationery. Sometimes, however, we find a detailed statement for official print alone. A payment to the Alkmaar *stadsdrukker* IJsbrant Jansz van Houten in 1642 of 113 gulden and 14 stuivers was stated to relate specifically to the 'printing of various statutes, ordinances and other publications'.²⁶ Yet only a single broadsheet ordinance issued by the magistrates of Alkmaar survives for 1642. Even more extraordinarily, Johannes III van Ravesteyn, *stadsdrukker* of Amsterdam, was paid 1,843 gulden and 3 stuivers for the printing of ordinances and forms for the city in the year 1659. So far only a few Amsterdam ordinances for this year have turned up.

What do these amounts mean in terms of production of ordinances? The average pay rate for the printing of ordinances in the Dutch Golden Age was around 50–70 stuivers for 100 sheets. The 1,843 gulden paid to Van Ravesteyn equates to the rough value of over 60,000 sheets of ordinances. If we estimate an average print run of 100 copies per ordinance, then this equals about 600 items. Even if we triple the estimated print run, to 300 copies per item, then we still get 200 items. We do not have even five surviving ordinances printed by Van Ravesteyn in this year – the contrast between survival and production is phenomenal.

In aggregate, taking into account the large number of jurisdictions, and the extent of the activity suggested by these account books, it seems certain that governmental authorities in the Dutch Republic issued in excess of 100,000 printed ordinances during the course of the century. Put another way, Dutch printers turned out at least 30 million sheets of printed paper for their official customers. The Dutch Republic truly was a state ruled by paper. Since none of this was specifically intended for retail sale, but for free distribution or posting up, this was a huge amount of work entirely paid for by the government. Printers had the luxury of working for a single customer, who paid cash, without any of the complex and profit-eroding tasks of warehousing and transport, selling consignments to booksellers and securing payment. No wonder the post of States or town printer was so much sought after, and printers took enormous care in the way in which they performed these duties. Working for the state really was a gold mine: and work of this sort played a vital role in underpinning the economics of the industry.



40 This is one of at least forty receipts issued by tiny North Holland jurisdictions, in this case the magistrates of the Schermerpolder. These printed forms offer a rare glimpse of a genre of print so ephemeral that few instances can now be traced, though at the time it generated an enormous amount of work for printers.

AMSTERDAM VERSUS ORANGE

Stadhouder Frederick Henry, who had done so much to heal the wounds in Dutch society left by the Remonstrant crisis, died in 1647. His son and successor as Stadhouder, the 21-year-old William II of Orange, was a man of a very different stamp. With the approaching end of the war against Spain, the regents of Holland were desperate to reduce the crippling expense of the army. William, as Captain-General, could thereby see his influence would be seriously undermined. For a year, the prince tried to persuade Holland's merchant oligarchs to relent. Some succumbed to this pressure, but Amsterdam, supported by several other cities, was defiant: they would not finance a peace-time standing army. Enraged by their obstinacy, William adopted another strategy to bring Amsterdam to heel. In December 1649 he confided to his cousin William Frederick, the Stadhouder of Friesland, that he would have his advisers 'make pamphlets and pasquilles against those who endanger the country and seek to return it to Spain, which will excite and stir the public'.²⁷

The tone of these pamphlets would have been familiar to anyone who had followed the public squabbles between influence groups, in Holland or elsewhere in Europe. But William advanced the use of print by a significant

step. The most virulent of these publications presented the articles of a fictitious alliance between Amsterdam and the English Commonwealth, signed in secret conferences in London.²⁸ According to this tract, the Commonwealth promised Amsterdam 10,000 soldiers and 25 warships to subjugate its opponents in the Dutch Republic and depose William as Stadhouder, whose father-in-law, King Charles I of England, had been executed by the Commonwealth the year before. The fictitious articles circulated rapidly throughout the country in multiple editions, affixed and strewn around the cities of the Republic.

On 30 July 1650, the Stadhouder took his chance: his bailiffs arrested the six leading regents of Haarlem, Dordrecht, Hoorn, Delft and Medemblik, and, in collusion with William Frederick, William's troops advanced on Amsterdam. The army, however, got lost on its approach to the city, and a messenger from Hamburg who stumbled upon them alerted the Amsterdam magistrates in time. William's troops arrived at Amsterdam to find the gates of the city closed against them. After a short siege and tense negotiations, Amsterdam accepted William's demands. The triumphant prince made his way back to The Hague – civil war was averted. The magistrates of Amsterdam were left licking their wounds: on 16 August they proclaimed an ordinance promising a 1,200 gulden reward for the identification of the author of the fabricated treaty with England and 400 gulden for the printer.²⁹ The republican constitution hung by a thread until, three months later, in a providential twist of fate, the Stadhouder was dead, laid low by smallpox.

The political struggle between William and the Holland regents in the summer of 1650 was a public conflict. For a few months, the citizens of the Dutch Republic talked of little else. Some sprang to Amsterdam's defence; others mocked its deposed leaders and the imprisoned regents held at Castle Loevestein. Printers and booksellers were all too happy to stoke the crisis. Although he printed some of the most polemical pieces against Amsterdam, Willem Breeckevelt also printed the *Blydschap over de Verlossing van Amsterdam* (*Joy on the Liberation of Amsterdam*), a piece aimed at the Stadhouder; William considered it so offensive that he issued a proclamation against this tract on 29 August.³⁰ Soon pamphlets responded to pamphlets, and popular titles like the anti-Orangist *Hollands Praatje* (*Hollandish Chat*) appeared in numerous editions and multiple instalments, reiterating the same vitriolic polemic under different guises. The deluge of cheap political print published in the summer and autumn of 1650 soon eclipsed that of the last great political crisis of 1617–1618. In the 1610s, Contra-Remonstrant opinion had held the upper hand, and much of the output of print poured

scorn on Johan van Oldenbarnevelt and his associates. In 1650, the balance of opinion was rather more equal, but no less violent in tone. Towards the end of the year, an anonymous pamphleteer produced a historical account of the conflict, concentrating on the tumultuous events surrounding the siege of Amsterdam. At the end of his narrative, the author paused to reflect on the extraordinary number of pamphlets which had been produced that year:

We do not judge it worthless . . . to consider the variety of opinions, of so many heads, printed on paper by the fury of their souls, and published for the world thanks to the labour and art of the press Today we experience an age which wishes to be learned without knowledge . . . It has come so far already, that one can call the printing of books a bad habit. Pens, formerly reserved for scholars, are now in the hands of the illiterate and brainless. O time, O manners!³¹

Ironically, the same author then offered a list of some of the most notable pamphlets and poems which had circulated around the time of the crisis, in effect a collectable wish list of the greatest hits of the conflict.

William's campaign was not restricted to anonymous polemics alone. Instrumental to the political crisis of 1650 was the publication in print of official letters, declarations and ordinances with which the competing authorities sought to justify their positions and embarrass their opponents. It was William and his allies in the States General who opened the first salvo by publishing in print several propositions made in the States of Holland in June. Here William and the States General accused the regents of Holland of endangering the Dutch Republic and the Reformed faith with their insistent demands for a reduction in the size of the army. William, in a proclamation of 30 June, singled out the city of Amsterdam as the chief perpetrator of discord in the union. The States of Holland and Amsterdam responded indignantly with their own published declarations, the States addressing the other six provinces of the union directly in a letter of 27 July.³²

By this point William had formulated his plan for the assault on Amsterdam and the arrest of his opponents in Holland. The plan would not go ahead without two further public justifications. William published a letter (dated 29 July) directed to the magistrates of Amsterdam, in which he declared his intention to 'restore order' in the city; in effect, a declaration of war.³³ On 31 July, the day of the attack, William despatched printed letters around the country, formally addressed to the provinces of Gelderland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Friesland, Overijssel and Groningen. He explained that he had arrested six of the members of the States of Holland, blaming them and

the city of Amsterdam for encouraging a rift in the union. Again, William emphasised that he had taken this action ‘in order to maintain calm, unity and peace in our country’, and ‘that we, in this course of action, have no other intention or design than the conservation of the true Reformed Christian religion, for which we are prepared to offer our blood and life, and the state of the generality’. Copies of the printed letter were also sent to the magistrates of the cities of Holland.³⁴ In the aftermath of the assault, the States of Friesland, Gelderland, Zeeland, Utrecht and Overijssel all took to print to express their support of the Stadhouder’s actions.

The strategies of state communication employed in the summer of 1650 were directly responsible for the ensuing public debate on the legitimacy of William’s attack on Amsterdam. By publicising their differences and providing identifiable scapegoats the authorities opened the way for their supporters to satirise, lampoon and abuse their opponents: but also for the other parties to use the same weapons. One anti-Orangist pamphleteer remarked in a response to William’s printed proposition to the States of Holland of 30 June that William had deemed it:

insufficient to deliver a proposition to the city councils [in manuscript]; it was instead decided to have it printed, by which the same was presented to the whole community, indeed to the whole world; and when everyone is spoken to, so may everyone respond.³⁵

Crucially, the whole world was spoken to: the official publications issued by the Prince of Orange, the States General, the States of Holland and the city of Amsterdam circulated in numerous editions, more than most political pamphlets. The Deduction of Amsterdam survives in eleven editions, the letter of the States of Holland of 27 July survives in six editions, and William’s letter of 31 July survives in nine editions. Even the declarations by the States of Zeeland and Friesland were printed in at least three or four editions. Those who wished to establish their position with historical sources in hand could also avail themselves of the articles of the Union of Utrecht (1579), reprinted no fewer than five times in 1650, for consultation in the divisive debates that summer.³⁶

The political appeal to unity, and its evident absence in the Dutch Republic, was a persistent theme in the public conflict waged by the competing authorities of the seven provinces. Each side claimed that they were the protectors of unity, and thereby ensured the prosperity of the state. Prince William II argued in his propositions and letters that his actions

stood for the unity of the Republic; at the same time an anti-Orangist pamphleteer, defending the sovereignty of Holland, argued that the autonomy of the provinces enabled harmony to flourish throughout the Republic. He added, for good measure, that 'it is known, that unity makes strength, and so discord makes impotence'.³⁷ The choice of this phrase was highly significant, since it was building on the motto of the States General, *Concordia res parvae crescent*, 'Small things flourish in concord'.

The articles of the Union of Utrecht were hopelessly inconsistent on the subject of unity. But the principles invoked by William and his republican opponents were of immense importance. The authority of the city councils and provincial States was inextricably tied to perceptions of their efficiency as guardians of the union. By publishing in print their nominally secret deliberations, letters and resolutions, Dutch authorities offered the public a glimpse into the closed chambers of the States or the city hall. But they also invited reprisals. In so doing, they learned one of the bitterest lessons of pursuing politics in print, that an attack on a rival authority inevitably weakens the public's trust in authority itself.

PART III

TRUE FREEDOMS

CHAPTER NINE



The Dangerous Pleasures of Leisure

WHEN WILLIAM II OF Orange unexpectedly died of smallpox in November 1650 the regents of Holland became once more the dominant force in Dutch politics. William's only issue was an infant son, born one month after his own death. The Orange claim to leadership necessarily lay dormant while the young William III grew to adulthood. This opened the way to a sustained period of regent rule without the looming presence of a Stadhouder, dubbed by its friends the *Ware Vrijheid*, the True Freedom. From 1653, this experiment in pure republicanism was presided over by Johan de Witt, the new Grand Pensionary of Holland, and one of the most remarkable public servants to hold the reins of power in any of Europe's nation states.¹

De Witt's first task was to end the war with England initiated by Oliver Cromwell, a war potentially ruinous to Dutch trade. This was the first of a series of international crises that would punctuate the next two decades, a clear indication that the emergence of the Dutch as a major trading nation would not go unchallenged by its neighbours. That the ties of history and a shared Protestant heritage could not prevent a growing enmity with England was an ominous development, and the two countries would clash again after the restoration of King Charles II, this time less disastrously for the Dutch. De Witt had made sure that the deficiencies of the navy revealed by the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652–1654) had been addressed. In 1667, during the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667) the Dutch fleet, led by Admiral Michiel de Ruyter, with De Witt's brother Cornelis at his side, pulled off one of the most audacious military operations of the century: sailing up the Medway to attack the English fleet at anchor, burning thirteen ships and towing away as trophies two capital ships, including the *Royal Charles*. This stunning humiliation brought the English to the negotiating table, while in the Netherlands the nation's poets hastened to hymn the glories of Dutch naval power and the heroes of the hour, De Ruyter and Cornelis de Witt.

Joachim Oudaen, Joost van den Vondel, Jacob Westerbaen, Pieter de Groot and Adriaen Paets all played their role in this festival of triumphalism.² For those desiring a more visceral act of celebration, the *Royal Charles* was put on display for tourist visits; even when it was eventually scrapped and broken up, its stern piece, with the English royal arms, was retained (and can still be seen in the Rijksmuseum today).

This was an era when all the nation's resources, including its poets, would be mobilised in the defence of the prosperity created by the Dutch miracle. In this, as in any age, poetry, theatre and literature were deeply political, effective when mobilised to praise the nation's rulers, potentially deadly when ranged in opposition. Crucially, for most of these two decades, the continued drumbeat of war did not fundamentally undermine the prosperity generated by four decades of rapid economic growth. Despite huge increases in taxation to fund the building programme for the navy, the fabric of society held.

The book industry, too, continued to enjoy steady profits. These were the years when Dutch publishers and booksellers established an increasingly dominant role in the international trade, selling on books published elsewhere in Europe as well as their own Latin works, and supplying to domestic customers high-value volumes published abroad. This exploitation of the riches of the European book world also increasingly extended to its literature. The Dutch were fiercely proud of their poets, and men like Jacob Cats and Vondel developed a devoted following; but so too did international talents like Corneille and Molière. In the middle decades of the seventeenth century a literature of entertainment and leisure for the first time began to impact seriously on the book economy. Prosperity created both more leisure time and greater spending power: consumers were keen to invest some of this spare cash in books that spoke to their increasingly sophisticated literary tastes, and allowed them to demonstrate these accomplishments to their neighbours.

The True Freedom was thus a time when a rich culture could be richly enjoyed, not least because the strictures of the Calvinist ministers against the vices of theatre-going and lascivious reading had little traction with De Witt and his consorts. In political terms, the True Freedom was unapologetically elitist. De Witt was the master of politics behind closed doors, making policy with his regent peers. But the Dutch Republic had moved on. In its seventy years of independence, the creation of a new state had been a common project, involving all of the citizenry. There was no elegant Grotian formula to put the genie back in the bottle. Born into the regent class, and

marrying well, De Witt could well afford the Olympian rectitude that characterised his public life. But his attempt to exclude the House of Orange from influence proved increasingly problematic, inflaming a wide range of opinion and serving only to demonstrate the fragility of the regent power-base. Even during the prince's infancy, the Orange interest could count on a great deal of support among the nobility, the army, the Reformed clergy and indeed any who felt their interests were not adequately represented by the new regent ascendancy. It would be international events that brought down De Witt and his regime; but it is significant that when the project unravelled, there were few prepared to support a man who had offered the Republic calm and capable rule during twenty years of prosperity.

This tension, between a benign and well-meaning paternalism and a boisterous, ambitious public, was to a large extent replicated in the nation's cultural life. Many of the leading literary figures of the era, including Jacob Cats, Pieter Cornelisz Hooft and Constantijn Huygens, came from the regent elite. Like De Witt, these were men marinated in the classical languages, inheritors of a literary tradition that deified classical learning and spoke largely to those who shared their Latin education. Yet beneath the surface other forces stirred. Just as De Witt's regime could neither understand nor control the hectic participatory politics that had become the norm in the Dutch Republic, so too in literature. The classical tradition was under siege, with a shift from Latin to the vernacular, and a groundswell of enthusiasm from a new reading public who looked for entertaining ways to while away precious leisure hours.

The Dutch were a nation of readers, and writers: poetry became in effect a national sport. They immersed themselves in the developing history of their new nation. They dabbled in theatre, ignoring the rebukes of their preachers when they did so. In the course of the seventeenth century the Dutch reading public rejected a rigid embrace of classical letters for a broader, more inclusive, more congenial and more relaxing form of leisure reading. That, too, in a busy commercial nation, was a form of true freedom.

THE PEOPLE'S POET

Under the guise of fiction or allegory, writers will say more than they would dare to articulate in prose. In the Dutch Republic, the terms of political debate were set by the aristocratic regents: they decided what political matters could be discussed, and what opinions were considered seditious and punishable by law. But the authorities could never exercise efficient

control over public discourse. In the wake of the Remonstrant crisis of the 1610s many writers, publishers and scholars who did not identify themselves with the cause of the victorious orthodox regime – a motley crew of Remonstrants, Mennonites and Catholics – expended their literary energies on coded protest against the turn of events.³

One prominent site of subversion was the rhetoricians' chamber, a traditional gathering place found in most Dutch cities. Here literary *liefhebbers*, enthusiasts of poetry, classics and rhetoric, assembled together in much the same way as a trade guild brotherhood would have done. They organised literary festivals and prize competitions, they staged plays and processions; and they read, performed and drank together. In the sixteenth century the rhetoricians' chamber was a breeding ground for dissent against the Spanish Habsburgs. The rhetoricians, a mixture of statesmen, scholars and literary artisans, were proud of their position in public life, and reluctant to relinquish it after the revolt. In the 1610s and 1620s, the chambers provided a safe haven for alternative political and religious viewpoints, and, despite frequent criticism from the Reformed Church, they continued to play a leading cultural role in the early days of the Dutch Republic.⁴ Here those excluded from the corridors of power found their voice: poetry afforded them licence for what would never be permissible otherwise.

Subversive poetry could appear in innocuous places. In 1619, the Remonstrant publisher Willem Jansz Blaeu produced the first of a series of small-format Latin classics. He chose to inaugurate this new series with an edition of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, an epic poem on the Roman civil war between Julius Caesar and Pompey. The edition was edited by Hugo Grotius, the scholarly prodigy of Oldenbarnevelt's regime, who had recently been sentenced to prison in Castle Loevestein. In 1620 a Dutch translation was brought out with prefatory verse by prominent Amsterdam rhetoricians who were dejected by the outcome of the Remonstrant crisis: the statesman-poet Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, the playwright Samuel Coster and the poet Joost van den Vondel.

Of these three, it was Vondel's poem which drew the most overt comparisons between the coup d'état of Julius Caesar and the intervention of Prince Maurice in 1618. Vondel was one of the most political writers of the young Dutch Republic, and one of its most gifted.⁵ He was a Mennonite of Southern Netherlandish descent, who later converted to Catholicism, and worked most of his life in Amsterdam as a hosier. He was deeply entrenched in the circle of Amsterdam rhetoricians, and on familiar terms with the literary elite of his day. Vondel would make his name through his plays, of which he wrote

no fewer than thirty-three. One of his earliest was the deeply controversial, and hugely popular, *Palamedes*. Here Vondel took up the cause of the Greek Palamedes, who, despite his commitment to the common good, attracted the enmity of Agamemnon and Ulysses. Their machinations persuaded the people that Palamedes was a traitor, and condemned him to death. *Palamedes* was a thinly veiled attack on the Dutch Reformed Church, Prince Maurice and his allies – all those, in Vondel's view, responsible for the sad end of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. Vondel's preface announced to his readers that:

[He] who is called to the office of state, and devotes himself to the common good . . . walks the path of virtue, which, because it looks to be steep and difficult, is not walked by many. . . . Against him there labour those who place themselves above the common good . . . and who attempt to make his pious name and reputation hated: which, because they do not have any evidence, can only succeed through devious ways, littered with violence, falseness, lies and deceit.⁶

Palamedes was first published around November 1625, half a year after the death of Prince Maurice, by Jacob Colom, a Mennonite bookseller in Amsterdam. Vondel had anticipated the fury which would erupt upon publication and he went into hiding with friends. The regents in The Hague immediately demanded his appearance at the Court of Holland and copies of the text were confiscated throughout the country. If Vondel had been brought to The Hague he would undoubtedly have faced prison, if not worse. But the regents of Amsterdam protected their local son: they asserted their right to prosecute their own citizens, and only fined Vondel 300 gulden.

The whole affair generated intense publicity for Vondel. The Remonstrant minister Carolus Niellius, imprisoned at Castle Loevestein, rightly predicted that the ban of *Palamedes* would only increase its popularity, and make it known to people who would never have taken notice of it otherwise.⁷ Another six editions of *Palamedes* were printed within a few months. Although the play, for obvious reasons, could not be staged, *Palamedes* cemented Vondel's reputation as a playwright. The play became a rallying cry for the dispossessed Remonstrants and their non-conformist allies who had lost out in the Twelve Years' Truce. Even Stadhouder Frederick Henry enjoyed hearing *Palamedes* read out to him. There was also a rumour that the 300 gulden fine was paid by Albert Burgh, presiding alderman in the case against the poet, who was deeply sympathetic to the play and may even have encouraged Vondel to write it.⁸

Vondel would continue to enjoy staunch support from the Amsterdam city council. He had the honour of composing the play that inaugurated the municipal theatre, the Schouwburg, in 1638. The Calvinist consistory was appalled that the play, *Gysbreght van Aemstel*, set in mediaeval Amsterdam, featured a depiction of a Catholic Mass, and attempted to suspend the opening.⁹ After a deft plot change (the Mass was edited out), the show went ahead, and the Schouwburg soon became the centre of the theatre world in the Dutch Republic. Here the plays of Vondel, Jan Vos, Gerbrand Adriaensz Bredero and Pieter Cornelisz Hooft could be enjoyed for several stuivers; and satisfied play-goers could afterwards relive the drama in print, buying a copy at the theatre itself, or in one of the dozens of Amsterdam bookshops.

The rise of the theatre was a considerable boost to the market for printed literature.¹⁰ The additional exposure generated for playwrights like Vondel increased demand for their plays; the publishers who could maintain friendly relations with their poets, and control the publication of their oeuvre, could make enormous profits. Many of Vondel's early works were published by Willem Jansz Blaeu. After Blaeu's death in 1638, it was the Remonstrant bookseller Abraham de Wees who became Vondel's publisher, and whose family retained the rights to his plays until the early eighteenth century.¹¹ Vondel always gave his plays first to De Wees, who published them in an elegant, uniform style, with a distinctive woodcut device, a water well, accompanied with the motto *Elk zyn beurt* (To each his turn).

Vondel's plays, published in more than 250 editions in the seventeenth century alone, have survived very well, because they became collectable immediately upon publication. The individual plays, generally no more than sixty pages in quarto, are rather slim; but bound together with ten or fifteen others, they make up a sturdy volume, very much at home in a scholarly library. The appeal of these volumes was their inherent flexibility: the customer could put together their own set of favourite Vondel plays and arrange them according to their preference; some also adorned them with an inserted engraved portrait of the poet. De Wees' branding was so successful that when other booksellers like Kornelis de Bruyn and Jan Bouman began to reprint Vondel's plays in a smaller octavo format in the 1660s and 1670s, they too adopted the iconic well woodcut emblem, with the *Elk zyn beurt* motto.

Ultimately Vondel's popularity as playwright transcended the theatre, as some Vondel plays, like *Adam in Ballingschap* (*Adam Exiled*), were never performed but still printed, or, like *Lucifer*, performed only a few times, but printed repeatedly in the seventeenth century. Vondel himself noted that,



41 The expulsion of Adam, ‘the tragedy of tragedies’. This simple but dignified typographical arrangement was typical of the printing of Vondel’s plays by the family De Wees, always with their printer’s device of this ornate well, and the motto ‘To each his turn’.

judging by reprints of his plays, *Lucifer* was the most popular of all his productions.¹² That Vondel provided good business for the De Wees family was undeniable: his works made up over half of the output of the printing firm. The people’s poet and his publisher had a close relationship. In 1646, when Vondel was fined 180 gulden for writing *Maria Stuart of Gemartelde Majesteit* (*Mary Stuart or Martyred Majesty*), it was his publisher, Abraham de Wees, who paid the fine. Vondel had converted to Catholicism in 1641, and in this controversial piece he presented Mary, Queen of Scots, as the innocent and pious victim of bloodthirsty Queen Elizabeth I and her Protestant courtiers. De Wees might seem generous to have stepped into the breach for Vondel, but he was merely protecting his family’s major breadwinner. De Wees was able to print at least five editions of *Maria Stuart* within two years. A continued flow of new texts from the people’s poet was the greatest gift bestowed on any publisher, and it was well worth paying to secure it.

MONEY FOR NOTHING

The theatre helped cement the reputation of many writers, including Vondel and Bredero, but the playwrights made little from the performances at the Schouwburg. The profit from ticket sales went to the municipal orphanage and home for the elderly, the charitable institutions which had helped found the theatre. Bredero, who was also a painter, wrote in 1613 that self-interest had spurred him to painting and its 'sweet remuneration' because poetry could bring him pleasure, but little income.¹³ Despite Bredero's phenomenal reputation among his peers, this was a realistic assessment: it was hard for poets and dramatists to make money. Even the most famous poets of the Dutch Golden Age, like Vondel and Jan Vos, would never have considered quitting their professions to dedicate themselves exclusively to the muses. Vos, at one point the most influential dramatist at the Amsterdam Schouwburg, still earned far more as a glazier than as a playwright.

Yet fame brought other opportunities. Composing a popular play was one of the ways in which those lower on the social ladder could bring themselves to the attention of their social betters. The poet and tile-maker Joachim Oudaen was on almost familiar terms with a number of Rotterdam regents.¹⁴ Bredero, the shoemaker's son, was invited to the salons of the merchant-poet Roemer Visscher, and to the castle of Muiden by the regent's son Pieter Cornelisz Hooft. The artisan traders Vondel and Vos were admitted to the exclusive circles of the local chamber of rhetoric. Here social status came second to artistic creativity. Even outside the brotherhood of the rhetoricians' chamber, a regent or wealthy merchant might call on the services of a favoured poet, in exchange for a small fee or reward. Jan Vos sometimes received 50 gulden for a poem, or a vat of wine; Vondel received a silver chalice from the magistrates of Amsterdam for his poem on the inauguration of the new city hall of Amsterdam in 1655, a paean of praise which helped justify the extravagant 8 million gulden building costs to its critics.¹⁵

This is not to say that poets had no convictions. The poet and inn-keeper Jan Zoet was a fervent Orangist, and took up his pen for the cause of the prince with little financial encouragement.¹⁶ Yet poets were aware that the rewards of patronage could be plentiful, and actively sought recognition from their social superiors. Vondel's reputation allowed him to aim high: he once received a golden chain worth 500 gulden from Queen Christina of Sweden, and dedicated his *Lucifer* to the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand III. But most Dutch authors looked to their local city council for support, or to members of the political elite. Dedications were never assured of a welcome reception, but it was always worth a try. The States of Holland regularly authorised payments

of 300 or 400 gulden to honour works of which they approved.¹⁷ To a literary artisan who might struggle to make this much from a year's labour, this was a considerable incentive to cultivate relations with the rich and powerful.

Although they were few and far between, there were lucky poets who could generate a regular income thanks to their creative genius. In 1622 the poet-bookseller Jan Jansz Starter was approached by a consortium of wealthy Amsterdam merchants, who promised to pay him a regular salary in exchange for his services as writer.¹⁸ The patrons had opened a bank account in which they deposited 624 gulden a year, from which Starter could withdraw 12 gulden a week. In return Starter promised to remain resident in Amsterdam and give the patrons access to all his writings. The patrons would also reserve the right to call on him for poetry for any social event. For this he would be paid an additional 3 stuivers per side of paper, and 2 gulden for a song.

The bourgeois elite of the Dutch Republic played the cultural role generally fulfilled by the nobility elsewhere in Europe. They patronised the arts for their own prestige; and, in the case of Starter, made a financial investment to secure a steady stream of poetry for all occasions. To these wealthy Amsterdam merchants, to have a poet in their retinue was an accoutrement of power, another element of their newly discovered sophistication. Although Starter's reputation as a poet was created partly by the publication of his work in print, it was through these private commissions, destined for limited manuscript circulation, that he would make money.

It is safe to assume that Starter's patrons were no great writers themselves. But to statesmen-poets like Cats, Hooft and Huygens, literature was a pleasant pastime, a social activity which they enjoyed together, and one in which they teased and honoured their peers. If money was involved at all, it was to help see their work in print. Jacob Cats, best known for his emblem books, moralising works with numerous engravings accompanied by short verse captions, helped finance the publication of his early works. The lavish illustrations required immense investment. In a letter of 13 November 1623, Cats assured his fellow author Huygens that he did not make any money from his books. Huygens had made him aware of rumours doing the rounds in The Hague which had suggested otherwise. Cats was exasperated, because he had actually lost money subsidising publication of the emblem books.¹⁹

It is easy to see why some of Cats' fellow regents and courtiers might have been whispering such malicious lies. Between the publication of his first book in 1618 and his death in 1660, the works of Cats were published in over 180 editions in the Dutch Republic. His oeuvre encompassed a wide variety

of poetry, but most popular of all was his tract on marriage, the *Houwelick*, an ideal wedding present for any bride and groom. That a regent of the highest status – Cats was twice Grand Pensionary of Holland – should achieve such public popularity was unheard of. Cats' political rivals and enemies were only too happy to spread the rumour that the Grand Pensionary was enriching himself by writing for the masses. Whether 'Father Cats' did write for the common people is dubious. The price of most works of Cats, generous quartos or octavos with dozens of engravings, were out of the range of most book-buying citizens. The cheapest Cats could be had for 8 stuivers, but a price of 2 to 5 gulden was more common.²⁰ The immense folio of Cats' collected works, published in the 1650s in several editions of almost 1,500 pages and 400 illustrations, could sell for up to 35 gulden.²¹

The appeal of Cats was enhanced by the fact that he was such a prolific poet, which meant that his admirers might buy four or five different works. Dutch printers certainly welcomed the literary efforts of the Grand Pensionary, more so, in any case, than those of Hooft or Huygens. It was a painful reminder to the literary elite that their tastes did not necessarily coincide with the financial conservatism of the book trade. Unless, of course, the statesmen-poets were willing to pay to join the literary pantheon.

THE WEDDING SINGER

Among literary scholars, the second half of the seventeenth century is seen as an age of decline. As the great generation of Cats and Vondel vacated the stage, there were none of the same calibre to take their place. The trope is all the more powerful because, with a little pushing and pulling, the timeline can be made to fit with a similar crisis in Dutch art, with the passing of the great innovators, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Frans Hals and Jacob van Ruisdael. The fact that from the middle of the century the Dutch became prolific importers and readers of French literature also helps fit the general narrative of decline, with the corruption of honest Dutch literature (and art) through Frenchification. Literary societies like *Nil volentibus arduum* in Amsterdam actively promoted French literature and theatre, repelled by what was considered as the vernacular vulgarity of the works of the popular glazier Jan Vos. At a bookshop like that of Adriaen Moetjens in The Hague, with the shop sign bearing the name 'The French Bookshop', the seventeenth-century collector would have thought himself in Paris.²² Some Amsterdam publishers, like Louis III and Daniel Elzevier and Abraham Wolfgang, also began to produce French literature at home, publishing numerous series of



42 Jacob Cats' *Marriage* was his most popular and enduring publication. Editions were usually lavishly illustrated, as in this example, and thought of as ideal wedding presents.

small-format reprints of French dramatists, especially the works of Pierre Corneille. These reprints were exported to France, where they drew the ire of many French booksellers.²³ Their loud complaints have overinflated the contemporary influence of these elegant little books.

In fact, domestically produced literature – Dutch and Latin – did not recede in the face of this French assault. The writing and publication of poetry remained a ubiquitous part of national culture, and the print industry played its full part in ensuring that this should be so. Poetry, from the carefully crafted effusions in a student *album amicorum*, to the posted scrawls abusing a corrupt local official, played an essential role in the ceremonial, entertainment and political culture of the Dutch Republic: it was this that gave it its potency and, sometimes, fearsome power.

Pieter Stuyvesant, the last and arguably most famous governor of New Netherland, was a flinty warrior trying to bring discipline and order to Dutch Manhattan. His virtues and limitations as a politician and administrator have been thoroughly examined, but what is less well known is that through all of these troubled and turbulent years he kept up an intense poetical exchange with a sympathetic young friend back in the Netherlands. It could be said, not unfairly, that the governor of New Netherland was not an accomplished poet, but that is not the point. It mattered to Stuyvesant, like Rembrandt a man of interrupted education, that he was able to take part in the world of polite letters, as this was the mark of a gentleman. Through his poems he was also able to give voice to his inner passions in a way that would have scarcely been possible in a prose correspondence.

Stuyvesant was a man of many enemies, and they too knew how to mobilise verse. When accused by Stuyvesant of treason, Adriaen van der Donck retired back to Amsterdam and inevitably took the opportunity to offer his own vision of a sustainable Dutch presence on the American continent.²⁴ The result was a multi-media propaganda barrage of considerable sophistication. It helped that there were so many in the Amsterdam elite who despaired of the WIC's sclerotic and incompetent management; they now proposed to bypass Stuyvesant in Manhattan by building a new township, New Amstel, ironically on territory that Stuyvesant had recently cleared of Swedish intruders. Van der Donck's description of New Netherland led the way, accompanied in the second edition by a fabulous map showing the extent of the Dutch colony, stretching away through three mighty rivers to a borderless interior. In this visualisation the territories of New Netherland fill the page, bookended by the puny and here peripheral British colonies of New England and Virginia (see image 28).²⁵ Here a picture was certainly worth a thousand words.

Van der Donck's campaign was supported not only by the city of Amsterdam, which underwrote the publication costs, but by other writers ambitious for an audience. Some, like Pieter Plockhoy, advocated using New Amstel as a laboratory for a social experiment in governance and religious freedom. Plockhoy's tract was accompanied by an extended verse panegyric for the new frontier. The first verse set the heroic tone:

You poor, who know not how your living to obtain
 You rich, who seek fortune without end
 Choose you New Netherland, which no one shall disdain

Before your time and strength here fruitlessly are spent.
 Here, your labour serves and benefits others
 There, the cultivated lands will give what you deserve.²⁶

The poet Jacob Steendam could claim a certain authority as a former colonist. A prolific writer, he was also a member of an Amsterdam circle of poets who collectively followed a progressive social agenda. Their best-known work is the *Parnassas aen 't Y* (*Mount Parnas on the Shores of the Y River*), a collection organised around fifteen social ethical questions intended to promote the happiness of the populace. Here, poetry was the natural vehicle for a language of social improvement that as a prose tract might have attracted the hostile attentions of the authorities.

Of course, poetry was not always so polite. In moments of tension and political crisis, verse diatribes poured from the press in a torrent, to be strewn around the streets, pasted up around town, and chuckled over at home. The famous Knuttel collection of pamphlets in The Hague has a thousand single-sheet political libels dating from the seventeenth century, and over half are in verse. None could have doubted the capacity of verse to stir passions and foment antipathy towards vulnerable political opponents. The calming image of schoolmaster David Beck and his friends exchanging compliments in verse, or Stuyvesant reaching for his quill on the lonely shoreline of Manhattan, was only one side of the Dutch obsession with poetry. The Dutch were well aware that poetry often overstepped the normal bounds of civil discourse, moving normally obedient citizens to acts of real violence.

To Dutch publishers, poetry, like so many profitable parts of the print industry, was important for its versatility. There were the dark arts of propaganda and libel, and poets so keen to make a reputation that they would pay to see their verses printed. There was poetry as harmless entertainment or literary display. Most lucrative of all was what might be described as the poetical service industry: verses turned out for particular ritual occasions and rites of passage. These were often in Latin, such as the poems that accompanied the award of doctoral degrees in the Dutch universities. These sorts of work attract little attention now, but at the time they were massively important to the printing industry.

In seventeenth-century Dutch cities the wedding poet was as necessary as the wedding photographer has become today. The celebration invariably included the reading of laudatory poems or the singing of poems in praise of the young couple. One could find plenty of printed collections of

appropriate material, such as Jacob Coenraetsz Mayvogel's *Vermakelycke Bruylofs-kroon* (*Delightful Wedding-crown*).²⁷ Cats' *Houwelick* was also a popular wedding present, which is why it was his most popular, and certainly most reprinted work. But one can understand that many couples (or more likely parents wishing to impress their guests) wanted something a little more personal.

So the family sparing no expense would commission their own poems, which would be presented to all the guests at the festivities, and despatched to those unable to attend. The poems were written in Dutch, and the pamphlets published as quarto booklets of eight pages. Sometimes individual poems were printed as broadsheets: some on cloth or silk as an elegant keepsake. Surviving wedding pamphlets tend to have large typefaces and a generous size of paper; this was print at its most luxurious, rather than purely functional.

Over 700 wedding pamphlets survive from the seventeenth century, but the real output must have exceeded this by far. Almost all survivors are found in large compendia; the University of Amsterdam has one bound volume containing over a hundred wedding pamphlets from the 1680s and 1690s.²⁸ We find wedding pamphlets produced in small towns, where they would have provided welcome business for printers without a large amount of other work, such as Kampen, Gorinchem, Hoorn or Purmerend. This was an ideal commission: a quick job, delivered to a single paying customer, presumably the father of the bride or groom.

This was also good work for poets prepared to turn out this sort of material. Jan Norel in Kampen and Katharina Lescailje in Amsterdam both made a speciality of this genre. But the dean of the chapter of wedding poets was undoubtedly Anthony Janssen van ter Goes (c.1626–1699), who first turned to this work in 1679 after a long career as a writer and poet. He clearly found it congenial, or at least lucrative, because in the twenty years until his death he wrote poems for over a hundred handsome bridegrooms and blushing brides. One in seven of all the wedding pamphlets that survive are his work. It is easy to understand, as parent of a soon-to-be-wedded child, why one would want to pay a real expert of the genre, for some poems are dreary verse such as this, written in 1691 to celebrate the marriage of Antonius ten Caten and Margareta Bronkhorst:

When a brave hero seeks to take a strengthened fortress
And he finds much resistance deep within
Then he gives his all; and with due time

THE DANGEROUS PLEASURES OF LEISURE

(Through his determined work) he is the victor.
This experience has informed groom Ten Caten
For however it repelled him, he persisted
And held on, unmovably resolved
To win one day Bronkhorst's daughter for his bride.²⁹

Here is a reminder that one did not need to be a Vondel to make a literary reputation, and a decent living.



43 The writing of poems for wedding celebrations created a popular keepsake for guests. But few were as elegant as this poem printed on silk in Batavia.

FROM THE *GEUZENLIED* TO THE REGENT'S PARLOUR

When the Amsterdam publisher Cornelis Claesz published his ground-breaking stock catalogues in 1608–1609, he had trouble with music. The Latin list had no music books, but the 'French' list had three sections of music books, in French, Italian and, perversely, Latin. The Dutch list had two sections – tucked away behind the Catholic books – of songbooks and then 'books in rhyme'; and even this did not quite meet the case, since there were further songbooks mixed in with the small books in theology, notably psalm books. This was an experimental age for stock catalogues, and publishers would chop and change before they settled on the best way to display their wares. But for music this confusion was emblematic of the curiously ambiguous relationship between Dutch publishers and music printing. This was an extraordinarily diverse market, stretching from collections of popular songs to refined polyphonic music in parts and sheet music. In general terms, Dutch publishers embraced the market for Dutch songbooks as another branch of the lucrative trade in cheap vernacular print, and left the refined parlour music to the import trade. That, indeed, was one of the few areas of print culture in which Dutch publishers scarcely engaged.

Singing, at home, at work, in the tavern and on the streets, was a ubiquitous part of life in seventeenth-century Europe. For the print industry it became big business. Collections of songs were as old as print itself, drawing on songs sung in the tavern or workplace, or by mothers at the crib. It was the particular genius of Protestantism that it recognised the pedagogic potential of this musical heritage. Martin Luther showed the way, adopting popular tunes for his new hymns, and the Dutch made their own particular contribution, in a mass of new songs celebrating the struggle for independence, excoriating the Spanish enemy and denouncing the Duke of Alva and his infamous new taxes. These songs were rapidly collected together in the *Geuzenliedboek* (the *Songbook of the Beggars*, the derogatory name swiftly adopted by the rebels as a badge of honour). These collections were regularly reprinted in tiny formats, often with crude woodcut illustrations of Spanish executions, the Duke of Alva, or portraits of Dutch heroes from the early Dutch revolt. As in the edition published by the widow of Isaac Reyers in Dordrecht in 1668, these illustrations were often used two or three times in the same text.³⁰

Many songbook collections contained mostly religious songs, and they were steady sellers: the *Geuzenliedboek* sits proudly alongside Bayly's *Practice of Piety* among the bestselling titles of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.³¹ And these were cheap, no more than a few stuivers. There were probably many

more editions, now lost, than we can document today. The most successful of all the songbooks, printed in massive numbers, was the psalms. The preference for metrical psalms rather than hymns during worship was a choice made early by Calvin in Geneva, and became the defining difference between Reformed and Lutheran worship practice. With psalms, the demands of the metre meant that secular tunes could generally not be employed. But the melodies could be taught relatively easily by the cantor (*voorsanger*) singing out a line at a time, which the congregation would then sing back: a singing practice that can still be enjoyed in some rural Scottish churches.

The psalm tunes did not remain the exclusive property of worship in church for long. Far away in the freezing wastes of New Netherland, Jeremias van Rensselaer used the psalms to while away the long winter evenings. In this he was emulating many in the homeland, including the schoolmaster diarist David Beck, who frequently had friends round for an evening of congenial psalm singing. Indeed Beck went one better: when guests came to share a succulent ham one lunch time, the company sang psalms during the meal. Since the guests remained until four in the afternoon, the practice must be considered a social success.³² It was also important that the Reformed psalm book, like the Bible, had an appeal that crossed confessional boundaries. In this context it is significant that when Pieter Plockhoy presented his utopian plan for a new social order in the American community of New Amstel he proposed that the church service should consist exclusively of readings from the Bible and the singing of psalms: implicitly acknowledging that the States Bible and the Reformed psalter were now the property of the whole Christian community.³³

So familiar were the psalms that it was almost inevitable that they would be further repurposed, as songs of war or spiritual affirmation, for use in the home or social spaces; and better this than abandoning the entertainments of leisure time to the lascivious love songs of the pre-Reformation (that is, Catholic) tradition. Many songbooks specified that the lyrics were to be sung to the tune of a familiar psalm. This had the further advantage that these volumes of spiritual songs, or indeed the psalms, could be sold without musical notation. The absence of musical notation became, indeed, the norm rather than the exception. We will remember from our earlier discussion of devotional literature that Dutch VOC ships carried twelve psalm books without music for every one with musical notation; that seems, as a rough and ready measure, quite likely to be typical of the industry as a whole.³⁴ This was very convenient for Dutch publishers. It made the printing of songbooks much cheaper, without the need for printing shops to equip

themselves with the special types necessary for printing music. It meant that far more printers could engage in this lucrative branch of the business.

Printing books with musical type, absolutely necessary for complex polyphonic music, was another matter altogether. When Gutenberg published his forty-two-line Bible in 1454, to a quite remarkable extent the technical problems of publishing books with metal types had already been resolved. But it would be the best part of another hundred years before a satisfactory solution was found to the problem of printing music. The crux of this was the stave, the set of five parallel lines used to signify the place of the note on the scale. There were two possible solutions. The first, ostensibly more simple, was to print the stave, and then to lay the notes in position in a second pass through the press. But dual impression printing was always tricky, as the first printers discovered trying to print with two or three colours. With music the task was particularly intricate, since if the paper was misaligned or shifted only a couple of millimetres then the notes would be misplaced.

This slowed the process enormously and led to many discarded sheets: printers heavily engaged in the production of music realised there had to be a better way. The solution, obvious but expensive, was to print each note with its own small section of stave integrated behind. This way the notes could then be slotted together just like letters. This was straightforward enough, except that the need to have each note separately cast implied a large font of type, each piece quite intricate. To obtain such types was expensive: single-impression music printing involved a high entry price.

It is scarcely surprising, therefore, that Cornelis Claesz's lists of French, Latin and Italian music books in 1610 included scarcely a single item published in the Dutch Republic. At this point the Dutch printing industry was only getting into its stride: there were few in the Republic who wished to take the risk, or incur the additional investment costs required for polyphonic music. What is more surprising is that with respect to music this situation barely changed as the century wore on. We can verify this from the catalogue of music books published by Jan van Doorn in Utrecht in 1639.³⁵ By this point Dutch publishing had experienced three decades of massive growth. When Van Doorn retired in 1644, the stock of his bookshop comprised some 8,000 titles. Van Doorn specialised in polyphonic music, and his music stock made up a far higher proportion of the total than usual. The 1639 catalogue lists over 600 titles. Since virtually all of these were collections of part books, with the different voices (normally soprano, alto, tenor and bass) sold in separate books, this amounts to some 2,400 editions. Yet of these only fourteen titles, some 2 per cent, were

published in the Dutch Republic. The overwhelming proportion of the editions Van Doorn offered for sale were imported from established centres of music publishing, most notably Antwerp and Venice.

How is this to be explained? If Dutch publishers thought profits were to be made, they generally did not hold back, and here was a market that was clearly buoyant and expanding. This sort of polyphonic music was ideally designed for the bourgeois parlour, and it was here that it found its most notable efflorescence. In the Dutch Republic there were plenty of clients with deep pockets, and an increasing devotion to sophisticated leisure. If we are to believe the evidence of Dutch painting, no regent's drawing room was complete without its keyboard, and friends frequently gathered to make music. Some establishments had elaborate lecterns to display the part books. To print such polyphonic editions required heavy initial costs, but such investment could not have been daunting to the well-capitalised publishing



44 This early painting shows Rembrandt was already addicted to the drapes and other props with which he would fill his house, though the strange arrangement of players gives little evidence of musical literacy.

firms of Amsterdam. Yet Amsterdam held back: remarkably, only two of the editions advertised by Van Doorn were published in the city.

There seem to have been two main factors at play here. The Dutch print world depended on bulk trade in assured bestsellers. Many were small books with small initiation costs: both these circumstances minimised risk. The *Geuzenliedboek* and psalm books fell squarely into this category. The trade in polyphonic music was not the only case where, when investment costs were high, the Dutch preferred to furnish supplies from abroad. High-cost legal texts in large formats were routinely bought in from Paris, Lyon, Germany or Switzerland, as to a lesser extent were standard medical tomes: this, along with musical polyphony, was now the only part of the trade where imports from Italy continued to play a significant role. Even in the Latin trade, the Dutch concentrated their efforts on producing small formats, where the risks were low and volumes high.

The other cause for hesitation was that polyphonic music was essentially a Catholic tradition. The established masters, from France, Italy or Flanders, were exclusively Catholic, incubated in the polyphonic church tradition of the Mass. This legacy was hard to shake. The one established Dutch composer of international reputation, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, was unusually versatile, working across confessions: his arrangements of the psalms make up a high proportion of the polyphonic editions published in the Republic. It was one thing for the adepts of musical culture to enjoy the exquisite harmonies of Orlande de Lassus, but it would have been a large step for the Reformed bookmen of Amsterdam to publish them.

So in the case of polyphonic music, the publishing and bookselling world of the Dutch Republic diverged, without rancour or debate. A couple of bookseller-composers, like Cornelis de Leeuw and Paulus Mattheisz, made a career of publishing music, but they were exceptional cases.³⁶ It was only at the very end of the period that the Dutch industry began to invest heavily in this market, in this case with the production of sheet music. This, however, turned out to be more of a cautionary tale than a compensating triumph. The market in sheet music turned into a struggle for domination between two French-speaking newcomers, the Huguenot Estienne Roger and the Leiden-born Walloon Pieter Mortier.³⁷ Roger was the more experienced man, having set up as a bookseller in Amsterdam in 1695, where he soon came to specialise in the production of high-quality music part books, especially the latest Italian productions by composers like Albinoni and Corelli. This was a market in which Roger introduced a daring innovation: instead of printing his part books with moveable type, he used engraved plates.

It was only in the first decade of the eighteenth century that Mortier decided to challenge Roger's domination of this market. Roger responded by reducing his prices, provocatively advertising these bargains in the *Amsterdamsche Courant*. In 1708 Roger published Albinoni's new *Opus 5*, advertised for 3 gulden. After Mortier reprinted the work, copying Roger's engravings, Roger dropped the price to 2.5 gulden; but when Mortier also dropped his price, in 1709 Roger reduced the price further to 2 gulden. This phenomenon repeated itself for four years with a range of new and reprinted Italian music books; by the end of this music war the price of some compositions had been cut by 50 per cent or more.

Experienced Amsterdam traders would have watched this struggle with more disapproval than amusement. The use of engraved plates for music printing was a risky business: the engraving offered an extra fineness of definition, and permitted more sophisticated notation, but each work required a new set of plates. This was only worthwhile if the profit was assured. By setting off this price war Mortier had challenged one of the fundamental principles of the Dutch market: that it relied on a finely graded plethora of products in a large market, rather than ruthless price competition. In the market as a whole, prices across different genres of print were remarkably uniform, depending almost exclusively on the number of pages, the format and illustration. Works that could command a price premium for a particular brand identity, like the Elzevier *Republics*, were extremely rare.³⁸

Mortier and Roger, incomers both, had broken the first rule of the market: that the Dutch book world worked best by a system of subtle accommodation between publishers. This was the principle of the *sorteringen*, the wholesale auctions of stock exclusive to the trade, that helped reduce dangerous overstocking and spread risk. When publishers over-reached themselves in their search for profit or monopoly, as we saw with the salutary tale of the States Bible, the industry rose up to thwart them.³⁹ The market in polyphonic music might not have been a major source of profit for Dutch publishers, as it was for their booksellers; but it provides a fine example of why the book market in the Dutch Republic functioned so well, by respecting the checks and balances established to ensure that all could profit.

THE ALPHEN PIG WAR

In November 1686 four men were roused from their beds in the middle of the night and hustled off to jail in The Hague. They were not, as might be imagined from these rather theatrical proceedings, suspected murderers

or thieves, but protagonists in the so-called Alphen Pig War. It all began with a song sung in a tavern in Alphen aan den Rijn. The song denounced officials who stood behind a controversial local minister, who had shocked Alphen's citizens with his more than usually outrageous behaviour.⁴⁰ The previous year, under pressure from a part of the congregation who disliked his (Orangist) politics, minister Adriaen Bouman had connived with local supporters to disrupt a commission sent to investigate whether he had falsely represented his credentials on appointment. A group of Bouman's supporters burst into a meeting of the commission and forced the secretary to write a letter exonerating their champion. Bouman was not present but did little to disguise his complicity, inviting those concerned back to his house to toast their triumph with wine. The song was his opponents' outraged response.

In truth, all had not been well for some years. Alphen aan den Rijn was a largish community occupying a strategic position on a crossroads of waterways between Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht. In the seventeenth century, the village had expanded rapidly, causing the local lord to split the secondary township of Oudshoorn into a separate parish. The two now antagonistic communities competed to attract the best ministers, but their choice was further clouded by the competition between the University of Leiden, dominated by followers of Johannes Coccejus and dedicated to the True Freedom, and the more Orangist, hard-line Calvinists of Utrecht. The traumatic legacy of 1672, the Disaster Year, further polarised these divided communities. Alphen was situated behind a strategic weak spot of Holland's defences, and when the French attacked, locals remembered who had remained and who had fled.

In 1686 this poisonous cocktail of grievances came bubbling to the surface. The arrested revellers were released on bail while the matter was considered by the Holland authorities. An indictment was drawn up, with a modest 1,348 articles against minister Bouman, though the integrity of the process was hardly reinforced when the Attorney General predicted that Bouman's supporters would 'wash the dirty pig', that is, keep his reputation clear: hence the Pig War. As so often when two well-supported factions collided in the courts, the result was a messy compromise. Bouman was found guilty of fraud, but allowed to remain in post. His reputation seems indeed to have been washed clean. The local synod continued to make use of him in positions of honour and responsibility. Local men went back to the taverns.

The Alphen Pig War was one of any number of local squabbles that could erupt when drink was taken, and a nation of poets reached for their pens. Pieter Cornelisz Hooft, one of the great intellectuals of the Republic, was a great believer in the power of the spoken word: the 'art of rhyming', he believed, especially as practised by 'the ablest and most lively minds', could persuade far more effectively than handwritten pamphlets or printed books.⁴¹ Hooft, a man educated in the classical tradition, had in mind the beneficial influence of people like himself. But as we see from Alphen, poetry also had the ability to put into words the sort of pent-up frustrations that could not safely be expressed in prose, or circulated in a pamphlet or petition of complaint. The defiance of authority often sought protection in the ambiguities of verse, as in the Alphen pub song, where those singled out for criticism were not directly named but disguised with comic aliases. Often, as here, these disguises were fairly threadbare, and did not prevent outraged authority from seeking retribution. And that was necessary, for left to itself the circulation of lampoons could be the first sign of a deeper social crisis that would upturn the established order, as did occur in 1672. In a society where poetry was a ubiquitous part of life, none underestimated its ability to raise passions, for good and for ill.

CHAPTER TEN



Art and Power

SO WE RETURN AT last to Rembrandt and his sad bookshelf. It was not as if Rembrandt, in the glory years, had not been a great collector. His household was stuffed with valuables, and other materials swept up in the days when his spending was wild and unconsidered, even when it should not have been. This was an era in which virtually every business functioned with a high level of debt. All tradesmen experienced difficulties extracting payment for goods and services, and relied on their suppliers to extend them generous credit: this was the only way in which an economically vibrant but cash-poor society could function. It was never quite clear when this debt became uncontrollable; Rembrandt, indulged and self-indulgent, impetuous and all too aware of his own prodigious talent, misread the signs, and eventually even the friends who had come to his aid so frequently melted away. Rembrandt's bookshelf was but one of many witnesses to the collapse of his finances, and his position in society. What he had kept in his possession until the fire sale of 1656 included some indispensable help-mates of the artistic profession, such as Albrecht Dürer's handbook on proportion. The Flavius Josephus in German was undoubtedly of interest for the woodcuts; likewise the copy of 'a German book with military figures.' What was now to be disposed of included a gift from his old patron Jan Six that Rembrandt no doubt parted from with some regret, but fifteen of the twenty-two books were of so little value that they were not individually named.¹

The 'old Bible' Rembrandt had clung on to might have been a family heirloom, but there again it might have been a prop – perhaps the book used for the famous portrait of an old woman reading, sometimes thought to have been Rembrandt's mother (1631, now in the Rijksmuseum). Rembrandt was a great browser in the stalls around Amsterdam. But even then it was not the book stalls that most captured his attention, but stalls and shops where he could pick up exotic cloths and drapes, swords and other objects that might be useful for a historical portrait. These too are painfully listed in the 1656 inventory: the contrast between the thirty-three antique handguns and wind instruments, two iron helmets and four crossbows, and the small

number of books, is very telling. Right up until this final plunge into the financial abyss, Rembrandt had kept what he felt was absolutely necessary to his work. These props, the clothes, horns and marine plants and statues of the Roman emperors, fell into this category. Books, clearly, did not.²

Rembrandt's book collection was very meagre. For someone who had spent so freely this is surely notable – Rembrandt thought visually, and his engagement with the world of text was notably shallow. He was never happy in school and left early to take up an artistic apprenticeship. His brief enrolment at the University of Leiden a fact that has confused many observers, was almost certainly a ruse to keep him out of enforced service in the local civil guard, the *schutterij*: exemption from the obligation of service was yet another of the privileges enjoyed by students. Rembrandt's father and elder brother had both had serious accidents which left them with damaged hands through musket practice in the civil guard. So to preserve Rembrandt's most precious asset, his painting hand, it was worth enrolling him in the university, even though he had dropped out of Latin school.³

Clearly Rembrandt was not a great reader, but in this respect he was not wholly exceptional among painters. Many painters left a surprisingly small number of books. Vermeer, another now celebrated artist who experienced serious financial difficulties, had only thirty. The art fraternity produced few genuine bibliophiles. The Amsterdam engraver Cornelis van Dalen, who died at the young age of 26, probably in the plague epidemic of 1664, had a collection of 270 books, almost all of them Dutch. His library was sold in June 1665 in Amsterdam. Haarlem's Gerardus van Veen owned 350 books, auctioned in 1695. Rembrandt's teacher Pieter Lastman left a collection of 150 titles. The most notable book collector among the front rank of Dutch artists was Pieter Saenredam. But even here, Saenredam's celebrated collection, auctioned in 1667, amounted to only about 450 titles.⁴ This is less than half the average size of collections of parish ministers that came to auction in the seventeenth century; a serious scholar, as we have seen, might have ten times this number.

What this tells us is that for painters a large book collection was not an essential professional tool: if they collected at all, they generally collected prints. Newspaper advertisements reveal numerous auctions of paintings and prints from private collections, some offering an extraordinary opportunity for a spendthrift like Rembrandt to collect: on 24 September 1667 an apothecary in Amersfoort, Willem van Dashorst, advertised in an Amsterdam paper for the sale of 400 paintings of 'celebrated provenance', as well as prints, cabinets, and numerous luxury items and exotica.⁵ Collections

of prints offered artists the opportunity to continue their professional training, and to adapt to stylistic innovation and changing taste, without nosing around each other's workshops, or making the expensive tour to Italy to study the revered masters of the age. Neither Rembrandt nor his contemporary and Leiden rival Jan Lievens ever undertook such a trip, much to the frustration of their fickle patron Constantijn Huygens. Huygens believed close study of the Italian masters essential if his protégés were to be propelled to the front ranks of the international art world, and he had a point: witness the far higher prices that Gerard Honthorst could charge for his work. Before establishing himself in Utrecht, Honthorst had spent ten years in Rome, and his Italianate style soon caught the eye of patrons at court. He would be one of the few Dutch artists to die rich.

Prints – etchings and engravings – played an increasingly important part in the art world, at much the same time as they were beginning to replace woodcuts on the title-pages of books. The best engravers, men like Hendrick Goltzius, Claes Jansz Visscher, Romeyn de Hooghe and Jan and Caspar Luyken, attracted a national following. Their popularity was founded on the diverse application of their talents. They cut prints to hang up in the home, tavern or shop: these could be maps, landscapes or scenes of pious devotion. Their emblematic illustrations adorned the work of many poets, while histories required finely engraved portraits. Many books were advertised in newspapers with the distinction of containing 'fine engravings' or 'numerous illustrations'. Engravers also played a critical role in the dissemination of information; indeed, it was through the production of prints that artists made their most intensely political contribution to public debate. For what we learn, not least from Rembrandt's life and career, is that the art world was intensely interwoven with circles of power. Politics shaped the work that artists created, how they sold their art, and the extent to which they succeeded. Rembrandt was untypical in his extraordinary talent, but in the extent to which his career was shaped by a network of connections, he was entirely typical of the Dutch artistic world. In the complex and shifting world of Dutch politics, all art was to some extent political: and this was even more the case with the subculture of prints, woodcuts and engravings where the art and book worlds most obviously intersected.

SERVING TWO MASTERS

The Dutch discovered the art of propaganda remarkably quickly in the long conflict against Spain. The first years of the Dutch Revolt generated a range

of original images denouncing King Philip and the Catholic Church.⁶ But the concentration here will not be on these obvious propaganda pieces, but on the more subtle political impact of images published as news: publicising the critical moments of the apparently endless annual campaigns with which the Dutch armies gradually established secure borders for the new state.

A first and vital strategic target was the north Brabant city of Breda, a critical barrier against further Spanish incursion and the essential gateway to Antwerp, the holy grail of Dutch campaigning into the southern provinces. In 1590 the Dutch scored their first significant victory since the catastrophic loss of Antwerp in 1585, when Breda was recovered by a brilliant stroke planned in secret by Stadhouder Maurice and Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. A peat barge was floated into the city on which seventy soldiers had been concealed. Once safely through the gates, they were able to overwhelm the garrison and open the gates to Maurice's troops.⁷

This unexpected triumph led to universal rejoicing in the north, and naturally citizens were keen to have their own copies of images representing the scene. One of the most popular of these was published by Frans Hogenberg, a Calvinist engraver forced to flee Mechelen and now established in Cologne. This engraving, as was customary in news prints, told every episode of the story in a single scene. The sophisticated reader had to disentangle the chronology: sometimes a key was provided, with an accompanying text, to facilitate this. A second representation of the fall of Breda, more comprehensible to modern eyes, told the same dramatic tale in a sequence of images, in the style of a strip cartoon.

Maurice would achieve numerous other victories throughout the 1590s, most notably with the surrender of Geertruidenberg in 1593, the siege of Groningen in 1594 and victory at Turnhout in 1597.⁸ These northern advances came to a spectacular climax in a close-fought conflict with Archduke Albert in the first pitched battle to match the two generals at Nieuwpoort in 1600. All of these triumphs were captured for posterity by Jacques II de Gheyn, fast emerging as one of the most influential visual artists in the new northern state. De Gheyn, like so many printers and artists, was a refugee from the south, a product of Antwerp's remarkable laboratory of cultural innovation. He left Antwerp after its surrender to Parma in 1585, settling first in Haarlem and then in Leiden. His rendition of the siege of Geertruidenberg, a topographical map with little of the romance or drama of the Breda peat barge, was his first major commission.

We learn from De Gheyn's series of news prints several things of importance for the evolving history of visual propaganda in the Dutch Republic.



45 The Dutch Trojan horse. This memorable image shows one of the greatest feats of Dutch arms with all stages of the capture of Breda at once, with the arrival of the peat barge, the subsequent storming of the fortress, and the disconsolate garrison making their exit.

The first was that engraving was by now the preferred medium for the news print or map, rather than the woodcut. Etching or engraving, using a copperplate into which the image was inscribed or burned, was preferred for its fineness of line, important particularly for cartographic prints. But engravings required the extra pressure of a cylindrical press to force the ink into the paper; unlike woodcuts, such an image could not be achieved with a conventional hand-press. Thus, engravings could not be combined with text on a single press, as had been the case with woodcuts. The publication of an engraved image accompanied by text required two different presses and a delicate process of double impression.

Thankfully these technical issues had been fully resolved in the great experimental workshop that was Plantin's Antwerp. De Gheyn had learnt his trade in the city in the workshop of his father. And once the additional trouble of double impressions had been factored in, the new technique offered the flexibility to publish the image with different texts, texts in a different or several languages, or indeed to sell the image with no text. All these opportunities would be fully exploited in a versatile and fast-growing industry.⁹

The second striking aspect of these engravings was more curious. Despite Maurice's instrumental role in securing all of these victories, his figure can

scarcely be distinguished on the prints. This requires some explanation. Jacques II de Gheyn was an admirer of Maurice and would later abandon engraving for service in the Orange court, but here Maurice is presented not as the hero of the hour, but as the faithful servant of the Dutch state. The Orange arms appear on the prints, but below those of the States General. It is abundantly clear who is the dominant partner in the alliance that made possible these victories.

The engravers here faithfully reflected these political realities, not least because these were the realities of their lives also. There was a healthy market for news prints, but the regents would sometimes also indicate their appreciation by a generous cash gift. Pieter van der Bycke received not only a twelve-year privilege for his prints in 1600, but a gratuity of 250 gulden. A series of prints of the Battle of Nieuwpoort was similarly rewarded by the States General, who also sent copies to King Henry IV of France.

This sort of cultural patronage became a routine mechanism as a means of encouraging printmakers to publish the right sort of images. In 1607 alone, the States General granted 12 gulden to Nicolaas Rothamel for his book on the Dutch naval victory over the Spanish in the Strait of Gibraltar; 100 gulden to the Amsterdam bookseller Desiderius de la Tombe for his presentation of a book translated from English to Dutch 'featuring the account of the procedures against the treacherous Jesuit Garnet and his accomplices'; and 100 gulden to the engraver Floris Balthasar for his dedication and presentation of an engraving of the failed assault on the Betuwe by the enemy the previous year.¹⁰ This was a shrewd deployment of cash. For every payment made there were doubtless many engravers and publishers producing similarly helpful imagery for the free market. The hope of patronage helped shape publication strategies as well as public taste. This was a very different sort of cultural patronage from that practised in Europe's royal courts, with huge fees offered to attract the most distinguished painters. This was naturally the model emulated in the Orange courts, of which Rembrandt was at one point a beneficiary. But such images would only ever be seen by a relatively small number from a restricted social milieu. By rewarding the printmakers the States General shaped a medium that would be far more widely disseminated.

CHOOSING SIDES

News prints shaped the interpretation of events, and there is no doubt that they helped build a patriotic sense of nationhood in the crucial decades

between the fall of Antwerp and the promulgation of the Twelve Years' Truce in 1609. This was a period when the fate of the new state still hung in the balance and the ruling powers within the new state cooperated effectively in the common cause. The decades that followed would offer a sterner test. It was one thing to laud the achievements of their leaders when regents and the House of Orange worked together. When this brittle consensus collapsed the printmakers were forced to choose sides. The States General had been generous patrons. But the savage denouement of the Remonstrant controversy revealed a strand of popular Orangism that could also be exploited for pecuniary gain; the printmakers adapted smoothly to this new political climate.

If the printmakers had struggled to know quite what to make of Maurice in his years as an all-conquering general, they knew exactly what to do when his old friend Oldenbarnevelt was marked out for destruction. The vituperation of the print campaign against Oldenbarnevelt was unprecedented in the new state, indeed since the first stages of the Dutch Revolt. To his own



46 The School-teaching of Oldenbarnevelt. The key helps readers identify the villains of the piece, and the couplet at the bottom drives home the message: 'We study hard, and conspire, to travel to Spain, which we so desire.'

astonishment Oldenbarnevelt now found himself compared with the Duke of Alva, the pantomime villain of the Spanish tyranny.

In painting this dark picture of the Republic's founding statesman his enemies could rely on a cadre of printmakers with strong Contra-Remonstrant credentials. Some of the most aggressive and effective images were the work of Pieter Feddes van Harlingen, a resident of Leeuwarden in Friesland, always throughout the century a citadel of orthodoxy. Feddes was responsible for two images that appeared on the title-pages of widely circulated pamphlets, the *Wonderlijcken Droom vande School-houdinghe van Mr Jan van Oldenbarnevelt* (*Wonderful Dream of the School-teaching of Oldenbarnevelt*) and the *Verclaringhe van den Gouden Blaes-balck* (*Explanation of the Golden Bellows*). The first shows Oldenbarnevelt teaching school, surrounded not only by the leading Remonstrants, but with major Protestant dissenters such as David Joris and Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert among his pupils. In the second the bellows plied by a Spaniard shower Oldenbarnevelt and his allies with coin. Feddes' most ingenious image was the *Afbeeldinghe van den Ouden ende Nieuwen tijd* (*The Old and New Times*), a broadsheet depicting Oldenbarnevelt conferring with his cohorts, with Hugo Grotius whispering in his ear. This is a flap print. Raising the flap reveals a second image, of Alva and his Council of Blood. The accompanying text represents a conversation between two honest burghers whom we may call 'Best Mate' and 'Dim Tim'. The two friends are discussing the image. 'Wait,' says Best Mate, 'what do I see there?'

Look at these novelties
 Hey pal, look for a moment
 How beautifully this is etched
 Hey, let us see: and is that not Barnevelt?¹¹

The conversation ends with Dim Tim acknowledging the extent of Oldenbarnevelt's treasons, and abandoning his scruples about the old man's severe treatment.

By far the most important of the engravers recruited to blacken Oldenbarnevelt was Claes Jansz Visscher, whose sequence of illustrated prints offered a chronicle of the unfolding drama. It was Visscher who provided the definitive image of the scene of execution, evoked, as we have seen, so movingly in the special issue of Broer Jansz's newspaper.¹² Visscher, an Amsterdammer by birth, had cut his teeth in his father's mapmaking business, and his family developed a decent trade providing illustrations for editions of the Bible.¹³ But it was the Remonstrant controversy, and its grim

aftermath, that made his career. The execution print was followed by *De Arminiaanse Schans* (*The Arminian Fortification*). This notorious barrier was built in front of the Leiden city hall to protect the Remonstrant town authorities from outraged citizens. This was regarded as one of the critical missteps made by Oldenbarnevelt and his allies and undoubtedly played a major role in persuading Maurice to intervene to end the crisis.¹⁴ Visscher's third major image, *D'Arminiaensche Uytvaert* (*The Arminian Exodus*), portrays a winding wagon train loaded with the Arminian ministers forced into exile. A key helpfully identified the major figures by name, and in the foreground two farmers, Kees and Joost, reflect on the extraordinary events unfolding before their eyes.

Visscher chooses a more naturalistic, journalistic style than that of Feddes, and his images are no less effective for that. But this is still a carefully adjusted reality. *De Arminiaanse Schans* was published only after the barrier itself had been safely demolished, and the violent attack of the illegally recruited guards on the innocent citizens gathered outside was a gratuitous additional detail. For his execution print, Visscher has a sober silent crowd pressing up close to the scaffold. There is no sign of the armed soldiers that Prince Maurice had despatched to ring the scaffold to prevent any attempt at rescue, or demonstrations in Oldenbarnevelt's favour. And of course the Arminian ministers did not leave all together in a single orderly caravan. Those who purchased these prints might imagine themselves vicarious eye-witnesses; but what was to be imprinted on their consciousness was a carefully ordered and partisan version of events.

In this atmosphere of vindictive denigration of the fallen giant, Oldenbarnevelt's family were not spared the outpouring of vitriol. The condemned statesman had been assured by his judges that his family would keep their estates and property, but these promises were quickly broken. The very public campaign to blacken the family's reputation, pursued in a barrage of libels, ballads and pictures, confirmed their alienation. According to the historian Gerard Brandt (admittedly a Remonstrant, so hardly an unbiased witness):

The country swarmed with the most reproachful lampoons, ballads and pictures, which were dispersed everywhere, pasted up against the houses [of Willem and Reinier, Oldenbarnevelt's sons] . . . in all of which their father was painted in the most odious colours, and represented as a traitor to his country; which not a little exasperated and embittered the minds of these gentlemen.¹⁵

The result was a reckless, doomed plot to assassinate the Stadhouder in 1623. It achieved nothing more than the further devastation of Oldenbarnevelt's family. Reinier van Oldenbarnevelt was arrested and executed, along with the brothers' accomplices; Willem escaped south to Brussels. Once again Visscher was on hand to provide the definitive narrative image of the multiple executions.¹⁶ This, however, took time to compose: the immediate thirst for public information was quenched by a rush of more hurried and cruder compositions. Visscher's elegant engraving was pre-empted by woodcuts, many of which, with little regard for historical reality, recycled other earlier scenes of execution for which the woodblock was still to hand. Some simply reprinted blocks cut for Oldenbarnevelt's execution four years previously; others reached back to much earlier material. The result of this recycling, far from unusual in the art world, was to associate the two processes – the still controversial trial that had condemned the elderly statesman, and the flagrant treason of his sons – much more clearly in the minds of the reading public. Oldenbarnevelt was condemned once more, this time by the folly of his children.

Much of the public interest in this second crisis focused on the Remonstrant clerics caught in the backwash. The dismal end of the hapless Henricus Slatius was followed with particular relish. Slatius had been on the government's radar for some time. The incendiary tracts he published in the years surrounding the Synod of Dordt caused particularly embarrassment to the Remonstrant leadership, who tried without much success to distance themselves from an erratic and unwelcome ally. In the wake of the plotters' arrest Slatius had tried to escape to Germany, but had been arrested when panicked by soldiers in an inn where he was sheltering. Visscher and others derived much merriment from the peasant garb in which Slatius had attempted to disguise himself; engravings showed him in this humiliating costume, along with the tankard of beer he had abandoned in a vain attempt to escape arrest. The farce of his last remains, twice liberated from the scaffold after his execution and re-buried by his wife and other sympathisers, provided further grist to the mill of the news print industry. It also served a useful purpose in making the disgraced Remonstrants seem not only treasonous but positively ridiculous.

THE REMONSTRANT UNDERGROUND

The Remonstrant controversy ruined many lives, and cast a deep shadow over the Dutch Reformed Church. But for Rembrandt, curiously, the fissure

in the Reformed Church offered a career lifeline. The Remonstrant controversy had cast out of office dozens of well-connected, rich individuals. In their years in the wilderness they expressed their solidarity, and rebuilt their social position, by acts of patronage and furtive, coded acts of resistance. This provided an opportunity for someone like Rembrandt, whose family connections (deeply Catholic) provided no obvious avenue to wealthy patrons. The intricate web of inclusion and exclusion, shifting alliances and unshakeable beliefs provided plentiful opportunities for cultivation of an alternative network. Rembrandt, for all the patronage he enjoyed as a youthful prodigy from Prince Frederick Henry and Constantijn Huygens, was for much of his career deeply embedded in the network of the partly excluded: Mennonites, Remonstrants and Catholics. When these connections were severed Rembrandt began the spiral into debt and friendlessness which he never escaped.

It was quickly apparent that not all the defeated allies of Oldenbarnevelt were prepared to accept the Orangist coup without some sort of response. This would not take the form of direct opposition – the failed assassination plot demonstrated the folly of that. Rather the shattered solidarity of the Remonstrant elite was rebuilt by careful coded expressions of artistic defiance. In March 1619 the Leiden publisher Govert Basson was brought before the magistrates for having published a portrait print of Rombout Hogerbeets, one of those tried with Oldenbarnevelt and subsequently sentenced to life imprisonment. The publication of the print was not in itself unusual: Visscher had engraved a whole series of the principal Remonstrants, which he used as a sort of rogue's gallery to decorate elaborate versions of his major prints. The difference here was that the Basson portrait was published with a poem praising Hogerbeets, penned by the influential Leiden humanist scholar Petrus Scriverius. This seems to have had a considerable resonance among those smarting from the treatment of Oldenbarnevelt. Basson admitted to having sold 400 copies, and the English ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton, who in general approved of Maurice's firm action, was clearly aware of its impact.

Scriverius, who was also an early patron of Rembrandt, was a leading figure in this covert underground resistance. It was Scriverius who in 1621 commissioned the 14-year-old Cornelis Saftleven to design a parody of the leading Contra-Remonstrants as farmyard animals. When pushed into a corner Scriverius did as intellectuals do – he tried to blame the rude mechanicals, in this case his unfortunate printer. He was still convicted and fined 200 gulden. Basson received a similar fine and had the engraved plates

of the Hogerbeets print confiscated. This comparatively mild treatment, after a long trial, suggests that the States General were at this point keen to draw a line under the polemical exchanges. In November 1619 they had enacted a total ban on further images of Oldenbarnevelt and his allies. This promulgation indicates an awareness that opponents were also making their voices heard. According to Gerard Brandt, 'verses and odes, which emerged after the death of the Advocate, were being secretly pasted and scattered about . . . The poems of mourning and songs of grief flew from hand to hand. A few hours after his beheading one saw them pasted up in various places.'¹⁷ Brandt, significantly, is speaking here of verse texts. For the moment the authorities commanded the visual arts.

Leiden, now a Contra-Remonstrant stronghold, was not the most fertile territory for opposition; Amsterdam was a different matter. Here the Remonstrant revival was soon under way, symbolised by the election to the council of Andries Bicker, a man who would play a towering role in the city's politics for more than two decades. So when Rembrandt moved to Amsterdam in 1631 the ground had been well prepared. The first documented buyer of a Rembrandt portrait in Amsterdam was Johannes Huydecoper, a prosperous member of the regent class deeply embedded in Remonstrant circles. Rembrandt's Amsterdam agent Hendrick Uylenburgh, who most likely negotiated the contract, was a Mennonite recently returned from exile in Poland. In Amsterdam Uylenburgh would quickly establish a position of enormous influence in the Amsterdam art world, built on a complex structure of credit maintained by an informal coalition of groups that for one reason or another had no reason to love the Calvinist establishment. When, as part of a notarial document, Uylenburgh was required to list his creditors, these included five Mennonites and eight painters, three of them Catholic; and Rembrandt.¹⁸

For two years shortly after his arrival in Amsterdam, Rembrandt lived in Uylenburgh's vast factory workshop, along with a motley crew of Rembrandt imitators; clearly Rembrandt, the newly fashionable painter of Amsterdam's Remonstrant elite, was essential to Uylenburgh's plans. In many respects the timing could not have been more propitious. The elections of January 1632 confirmed the re-establishment of a Remonstrant oligarchy briefly expelled from the circles of power in the 1610s. But now Maurice was dead, and the strictly orthodox gradually lost their grip on power. The restored powerbrokers' new confidence was evident not least in the establishment of the Amsterdam Illustrious School, a direct challenge to the intellectual ascendancy of Leiden, then seen as the citadel of Calvinist rigour. The patronage

of Rembrandt, a newly arrived outsider who was not even a member of the local guild, was another useful symbol of this new era of intellectual independence; and Rembrandt, for suitable fees, was all too happy to identify himself with the new wave. In January 1632 Rembrandt would paint one of his most famous and eye-catching group portraits, the anatomy lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp. Innovative in style, this could also cock a snook at Leiden, for the tradition of Amsterdam's anatomy lessons predated the foundation of Leiden's university.

Many of Rembrandt's first sitters were Mennonites, a group who, despite their religious rigour, often made common cause with the 'libertine' Remonstrants. In 1633 he painted Johannes Wtenbogaert, the vastly respected spiritual leader of the Remonstrant ministers. The portrait was paid for by a member of the Amsterdam elite – Abraham Anthonisz – who had caused a furore in 1622 by permitting a mason to build an image of Oldenbarnevelt into the front of his house. Rembrandt's painting was followed in 1635 by an etching, with a provocative caption supplied by the exiled Hugo Grotius:

The pious in the land and the army spoke well of this man
But what he preached was damned by the assembled country
The years imposed heavy tribulations on him without breaking him
Behold, The Hague, your Wtenbogaert comes home.¹⁹

Unlike Wtenbogaert, Grotius was never able to return permanently to his native land. His one trip back, in 1631, was to Amsterdam, where he huddled with many of Rembrandt's Remonstrant patrons. Rembrandt's etching of Wtenbogaert was part of a hugely flourishing genre of portrait engravings; it allowed a far wider public than those who could afford a portrait to identify with their heroes. Many artistic workshops kept in stock images of as many of the Republic's celebrities as possible. Reformed ministers were not always happy to be included in this pantheon, as the Contra-Remonstrant publisher Marten Jansz Brandt learned the hard way. Brandt, as we saw in Chapter 5, had built his business by cultivating a close relationship with the inner circle of orthodox ministers, including the prolific Willem Teellinck. Brandt proudly advertised this collaboration with printed lists of Teellinck's extant oeuvre, which he attached to his editions of Teellinck's works.²⁰ But in 1626 Teellinck brusquely severed the relationship. He had taken umbrage because Brandt had reproduced in one of these editions the portrait of Teellinck drawn by Adriaan van der Venne and engraved by Pieter de Jode in 1622.

This was a fine and widely circulated image, but Teellinck was especially upset because the tract on which Brandt published the portrait was *Den Spiegel der Zedicheyt* (*The Mirror of Modesty*), in which Teellinck advocated for a sober and modest demeanour among all good Christians. This unfortunate juxtaposition caused much irreverent glee among his opponents in the church. This significant misstep on the part of Brandt, usually an attuned publicist, meant that he did not print any more tracts by Teellinck until after the death of the minister in 1629.

Wtenbogaert was also a difficult study and a reluctant sitter. Since he spent the years between 1619 and 1626 in exile, a single likeness by Paulus Moreelse taken in 1612 served as the model for numerous prints for twenty years. It was only in 1631 that Michiel van Mierevelt, a major dealer in prints, had persuaded the old man to sit for a new portrait, which Mierevelt immediately had reproduced as an engraving. When the artist died in 1641 two images of Wtenbogaert were listed in his estate. Then came Rembrandt and a third portrait, by Jacob Backer. Backer, like Mierevelt, was a Mennonite;



47 Rembrandt's magnificent portrait of Wtenbogaert, the leading intellectual figure of the Remonstrant movement.

once again Rembrandt was working in a milieu away from the mainstream, and deeply political. Rembrandt's etching of Wtenbogaert was circulated widely, and is known today in six distinct states. Perhaps Wtenbogaert recognised that in this case the need to rally his forces overcame the modesty proper to the ministerial office.

How conscious Rembrandt was of all this is difficult to say. In the early Amsterdam years Rembrandt could command high fees, and this probably meant as much to him as the religious affiliations of his clients. In the years 1631 to 1635 these clients also included Catholics and a few orthodox Calvinists; his wife, whom the successful young artist married in 1634, came from a well-connected family with strong Calvinist credentials (albeit from Leeuwarden, rather than Amsterdam). Family, business and social relationships were in any case too entangled for any artist to work exclusively within one group. Saskia van Uylenburgh was also the cousin of Hendrick, the Mennonite patron from whom Rembrandt had profited so greatly, and with whom he and Saskia lived for the first year of their married life. In Amsterdam nothing was ever entirely straightforward. But there is no doubt that the careful promotion of persons of compatible belief was a critical strategy in the stubborn resistance to the imposition of any narrow political programme, whether orthodox Calvinism, the pretensions of the House of Orange, or, after 1650, the Republican ascendancy. The cultural politics of the Dutch Republic provide a shining example of the eternal truth that parties far too divergent to rule together can nevertheless combine very effectively in opposition. Art was in this sense both the servant of political faction and its beneficiary.

TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

The Remonstrant, Mennonite and Catholic underground represented only a small part of the art of politics: small, and for the most part elite and intellectual. This was a world of inference and coded messages, and hardly likely to shake the foundations of power. For all the economic influence of the men who sustained these networks, such emblematic communications would have gone over the heads of most Dutch citizens. The political priorities of the lesser sort were on the whole more straightforward. They wished the Republic well, celebrated its triumphs and reviled its enemies. They identified fiercely with a state born of persecution, its painful birth-pangs still a living memory for the parents and grandparents of those who enjoyed the mid-century success of the new state. In 1640, when the population of

Amsterdam touched 135,000, three-quarters of this booming population were newcomers. Theirs was a newly minted patriotism.

Every triumph, every wondrous feat of Dutch exploration and military victory was warmly, generously celebrated: with national prayer days, bell ringing, fireworks and other festivities. Of course, the staging of such celebrations, and the distribution of woodcuts and etchings that engraved these events in the citizens' imagination, were also deeply political acts. Any overseas triumph, or the return of a successful trading venture, was the victory of one policy interest over another; defeat embarrassed one set of regents, and emboldened potential critics. And politics could turn on a sixpence. The storm clouds that gathered over the Republic in 1672 would inspire a far more sombre artistic response.

On 10 May 1624 a Dutch fleet in the service of the WIC captured San Salvador de Bahia, the capital of colonial Brazil.²¹ The attack on a well-fortified port was a risky venture, as indeed was the WIC itself. The speed of the Portuguese capitulation was as astonishing as it was miraculous. The



48 The first great Dutch victory against the Portuguese in Brazil, the capture of Bahia. This splendid image was sponsored by the WIC as an essential part of the promotion of their enterprise in the Americas.

success of Piet Heyn's fleet was a rare ray of light at a time when Habsburg forces were carrying all before them in the Thirty Years' War. In the Netherlands, it was greeted by an outpouring of patriotic jubilation.

News of the victory arrived in Amsterdam on 24 August, not an especially long delay in prevailing sailing conditions. As citizens flocked to celebrations orchestrated by the municipal and church authorities, and the Amsterdam newspapers competed to offer the first full accounts, the race was on to offer the first pictorial representation of this signal feat of Dutch naval prowess. For the WIC, this represented a priceless opportunity. Many in regent circles, particularly the shareholders of the established VOC, had opposed the foundation of the rival venture, a dangerous speculation that risked undermining the far more lucrative Asian trade. So making the most of the Brazilian triumph was a political imperative for the WIC, and could not be left to chance. The directors turned to Claes Jansz Visscher to deliver an image fit for the occasion.

Visscher did not disappoint. By this point Claes Jansz Visscher was an established figure, both in the art world and Amsterdam society. A solid supporter of the church, he was now an elder of the Nieuwe Kerk, citadel of Contra-Remonstrant orthodoxy in Amsterdam. Working with the cartographer Hessel Gerritsz, within a week Visscher had delivered a panoramic view of the Dutch fleet under full sail entering the bay of San Salvador. The image was accompanied by an explanatory text, linked to a key within the engraving.

This extraordinary feat of design and execution seems almost implausibly rapid, even given the obvious commercial imperative for speedy execution. Visscher and Gerritsz might have based their design on the extant sketch of Dierick Reuters, and no doubt there were many returning soldiers willing to share their recollections of the topography. This was the first of more than a dozen news maps on which Visscher and Gerritsz would collaborate over the next two decades. Some of these would be dedicated to later Dutch successes in Brazil, including a complex composite map celebrating the Dutch capture of Olinda in 1630, which could be assembled with different engravings and text blocks, all depending on the wishes of the customer. If the Dutch public had a vision of Brazil, it was largely that provided by this skilful collaboration.

As more details of the conflict emerged this provided material also for more traditional propaganda pieces. In 1624, the returning fleet had brought with it as hostages fourteen leaders of Portuguese Brazil, including the governor and the leader of its Jesuit mission. The WIC commissioned a

further broadsheet portrait of these prisoners, which Visscher executed not as a traditional group portrait, but as an interrupted conversation between the leaders of secular and religious Portuguese Brazil, their consorts reduced to dispirited cyphers huddled behind. Interpretation of these events was guided by the texts below, a conversation between a returning seaman and a sympathetic 'Batavian'. The presence of the seaman attested to the veracity of the image presented.

Visscher could direct the applause, but he could not dictate the tide of events in the Americas. San Salvador was quickly recovered by an overwhelming Spanish armada, and although the Dutch established a more enduring bridgehead further up the coast at Olinda, in the end Dutch Brazil was destined to fail. Needless to say, the crushing military defeats at the hands of rebellious Portuguese settlers that sealed the colony's fate received no coverage in the Dutch media. But Brazil established a pattern that to some extent would be repeated throughout the Republic's wars, of a tumultuous celebration of naval triumphs allied with satirical representations of obnoxious enemies, whoever they should happen to be. Such imaginative prints, like that of the regurgitating Spaniard sold by Jan van Hilten in the wake of the Battle of the Downs (1639), had a low retail price. Van Hilten sold a dozen copies of this broadsheet to Abraham Leyniers in Nijmegen for 2 stuivers apiece – a standard retail price for prints.²² It was a small investment for a great laugh, and one easily shared with friends, family and neighbours.

A consistent feature of these pictorial news prints was the lionisation of the nation's naval commanders. From Piet Heyn, who enriched the Republic by capturing the Spanish Silver Fleet in 1628, through to Michiel de Ruyter, these naval champions provided a flattering image of the Republic at its best. Enterprising and daring, men who had made their way to the top of their profession by their own merits were lauded as the selfless servants of the new Republic, whose valour delivered astonishing feats against seemingly overwhelming odds. The heroic death of Maarten Harpertsz Tromp at the battle of Scheveningen in 1653, defending the coastline of the fatherland in the First Anglo-Dutch War, was celebrated in a sumptuous print where the engaging ships are topped by an epitaph picture of the fallen hero wreathed in laurel. The picture of Tromp, hovering in the heavens, was placed in the position that would earlier have been occupied by the arms of the States General. The glorification of Tromp helped draw away attention from the fact that the Dutch fleet had been badly mauled by their English opponents, and lost far more ships. But in news terms the details of naval



49 The Battle of the Downs. The Spanish admiral vomits forth his fleet, while the Dutch sailor and the French doctor administer the purgative. This trope was used widely during the Thirty Years' War to celebrate the triumphs of both Catholic arms and the spectacular conquests of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden.

engagements were less important than was the case with battles on land. In open sea, there were no topographical features to provide context, and news of sea engagements, inherently chaotic as two fleets mingled with cannon roaring, was notoriously difficult to make sense of. In consequence, artistic representations of naval engagements tend to have a generic quality, a licence exploited to lucrative effect by the family Van der Velde, the undisputed masters of the naval painting, on both sides of the Channel.

Michiel de Ruyter was a particular favourite, his homespun features (he was the son of a beer porter) a guarantee of his solid Republican values. His miraculous series of victories in the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672–1674) can plausibly have been said to have saved the Republic; certainly, when there was little other good news to report, they were seized on as a means of bolstering battered morale. When De Ruyter died in 1676, fighting the French in the Mediterranean, his returned embalmed body was afforded a

state funeral in the Nieuwe Kerk of Amsterdam. A print published to mark the occasion shows an enormous winding cortege making its sombre way into the church; it was still being republished a decade later. The funeral of a naval hero was one event around which a bruised nation could easily unite.

REMBRANDT'S BOOKSHELF

Between 1627 and 1633 Rembrandt obtained thirteen commissions from the court in The Hague, including five from Frederick Henry himself. For these five paintings Rembrandt was paid the truly princely sum of 3,000 gulden. This was money beyond the wildest dreams of most painters. The average price paid for a painting in the Republic hovered around 6 gulden, and indeed the only Rembrandt painting recorded in a contemporary Leiden collection was valued at exactly this sum in 1649 and again in 1653. At this sort of rate it was impossible to make a living from painting alone: it would have required a painter to turn out something close to 100 paintings a year to obtain an income on a par with a parish minister's. Frederick Henry was offering as much for a single canvas. By paying so much above market value the Stadhouder was bestowing on Rembrandt, then in his twenties, a place in the first rank of the creative industries: status, affluence and an international reputation were now within his grasp.

Yet like most of Rembrandt's relationships with the rich and influential, the contract with Frederick Henry led to acrimony and disappointment. Rembrandt did not prioritise the work; Constantijn Huygens, in the awkward role of intermediary, thought with some justice that Rembrandt only delivered one of the Stadhouder's paintings when his finances required it. The last two were so hurried that the top layer of paint was still wet. Rembrandt was one of the few painters in the Dutch Republic with the talent and originality to rival Rubens – indeed, the last of Frederick Henry's commissions, a Crucifixion, was a clear invitation to match the old master. But Rubens had the business sense and organisational genius to channel his talent into one of the largest painting workshops in northern Europe. Rembrandt did not. He spent money faster than he made it, and alienated those who could help him. It was not necessary to pay 13,000 gulden for a house in Amsterdam, but Rembrandt did, taking on a mountain of debt that would pursue him for the rest of his life. The friends who lent him money were treated as badly as his patrons; in due course most drifted away, leaving him with the twenty-two books with which we began this investigation.

There are many things that are remarkable about this story, not least that at some points in his own lifetime a Rembrandt could be bought for the same 6 gulden that would buy you an unremarkable theological folio. Now the book would cost £300–400, while the Rembrandt might be worth £40 million. It makes very clear why few working artists built big collections of books, and why, for the shrewdest, the works they created were aimed partly at unlocking other forms of financial rewards: a retainer from a patron, or the spontaneous gratitude of the States General for a print lauding Dutch military achievements. But it is worth spending a little more time with the artists' books, since even these modest collections tell us much of the subtle relationship between these two creative industries.²³

Because of the later celebrity of Dutch seventeenth-century painting, the possessions of artists have been quite well studied. Few Dutch painters had a collection large enough to justify the expense of organising an auction, but any books they possessed would show up in an inventory compiled after death, a routine procedure when there was a reasonable property to be sold for the benefit of the heirs. Between 1651 and 1700 we know of 700 artists working in Amsterdam, and an inventory can be traced for about 60, that is 8 per cent of the total. These inventories cover all the household possessions, rather like the inventory compiled of Rembrandt's possessions in less happy circumstances in 1656, and about a quarter make no mention of books. This does not necessarily mean that these artists owned no books, or could not read: it is perfectly possible that a small number of titles of little value could have been disposed of to the family before death. In other cases the books are described in only the most general terms: 'an old chest with books'. But there are enough cases where artists left a sufficient number of books for the titles to be listed, and from these inventories we can gain a reasonable impression of the titles most likely to be present in an Amsterdam artist's collection.²⁴

Most artists, if they kept books, possessed a Bible. This was no surprise, as the Bible was an essential possession in any established family home; the challenge to the book industry was to persuade the pious Dutch household that they needed more than one copy, in more than one format, of the essential texts of worship and piety.²⁵ They do not seem to have succeeded in this respect with members of the creative industries. There are, however, collections that, though small, tell an interesting story about their owners. Albert Vinckelbruck died in 1665, leaving a Bible, some collections of prints, and thirty-four other books. These included books that frequently crop up in artists' inventories, such as Karel van Mander's *Schilderboek* (*Book of*

Painting) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. These were required for professional purposes, but Vinckelbruck also had a discerning collection of religious books, including Heinrich Bullinger's *Decades* and the *Apophthegmata Christiana* of Willem Baudartius, as well as history books and Hendrick Doncker's *De Zee-atlas ofte Water-wereld* (*The Sea-atlas or Water-world*). A parcel of the religious books were left to his daughter Marritge; the books likely to be of use in a painter's workshop were left to his son Abraham, who had followed his father into the family trade. From the discerning character of the collection, which also included Augustine's *City of God* and a *Chronicle of Holland*, one gets the impression that but for his family responsibilities (Vinckelbruck had seven children) he would willingly have built a larger collection.

Reinier Nooms Zeeman died in 1664, three years after he had accompanied Admiral de Ruyter on a punitive expedition to the Barbary Coast, a trip that inspired him to paint several Mediterranean landscapes. Zeeman's book collection was shaped by his career and connections. He owned a range of history books and the famous narrative of Linschoten's voyages. There was an interesting range of religious texts, including works by the Remonstrant Eduard Poppius and a Catholic book of sermons. His possession of Pieter de la Court's famous *Interest of Holland*, a forthright statement of Republican values later banned, identified him squarely with the States party of De Witt. Zeeman, it is clear, was an engaged citizen with a lively intellect. One can see why he would have admired De Ruyter, and why De Ruyter would have enjoyed his company.

Set along with the other inventories that survive in the Amsterdam archives, a clear pattern emerges of the texts that were seen as most useful for a practising artist. After the Bible the text most often enumerated in the inventories was the *Jewish Histories* of Flavius Josephus. Biblical subjects enjoyed a steady popularity throughout the Dutch Golden Age, both for private clients and for the decorative schemes of official buildings. Flavius Josephus provided access to a range of stories not included in the biblical texts, and the woodcuts also provided both models and inspiration. A decent copy could cost 10 gulden. This explains not only why Rembrandt owned Josephus but also why it was singled out in the inventory. This was just the sort of thing a fellow artist might want to obtain at the sale of Rembrandt's goods, along with a pistol or a colourful drape.

The next most popular texts among artists were Livy's *Roman Histories* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The *Metamorphoses* was a collection of more than 250 classical myths, and Livy provided models both for painting and

for decorative schemes. Around 10 per cent of the inventories contained a copy of Van Mander and exactly the same number a copy of Emanuel van Meteren's history of the Dutch Revolt. Again, this provided material and inspiration for paintings of recent Netherlandish events, and seems to have been preferred by artists over the competing contemporary publications of Pieter Christiaensz Bor and Everard van Reyd. Pieter Saenredam, in his much larger collection, owned all three histories, along with an extensive collection of technical literature.

Saenredam was in many respects Rembrandt's alter ego: a loyal member of the orthodox Calvinist Church; a man who built a stable marriage and a happy family life; an educated, erudite man whose approach to art was distinctly cerebral, and who built a recognised mastery in the genre of architectural church interiors. And he collected books. His was an unusually diverse collection, and the presence of many old books (over 150 published before 1610) suggests that a proportion may have been inherited. But Saenredam also possessed a remarkably comprehensive collection in the fields most relevant to his own profession: architecture, geometry and mathematics. He owned the canonical texts of the great mathematician Simon Stevin; Sebastiano Serlio and Vitruvius on architecture; and Albrecht Dürer's famous book on perspective, the text also owned by Rembrandt. Euclid was present in several editions in different formats.

Saenredam's collection is also interesting for what he did not possess. There are very few books on the theory of art. This is largely because very few such books on the subject were published in the Dutch Republic; the evergreen Van Mander, essentially a reflection on the artist's task presented as a series of biographical sketches, and the later text of Samuel van Hoogstraten, were forced to do service instead.²⁶ This curious absence, in a country that devoted more attention than almost anywhere else to the mechanics of trade, is noteworthy, particularly given the number of practical handbooks teaching virtually every handicraft. The result was that critical debates in the development of artistic style, such as the classical assault that is thought to have done such damage to Rembrandt's contemporary reputation, found little echo in the book world. It is a reminder that even in a country as bookish as the Dutch Republic there was a great deal that still occurred without the mediating necessity of the printed word. The business world, to which we will turn later, was another notable example.

The pictorial art of the Dutch Republic was characterised throughout by the high degree of technical proficiency demanded of its practitioners, and the same could be said of those who made their careers from prints and

etchings. Purchasers, and especially patrons, had a keen eye. They expected work to be careful as well as characterful and inspired. In this connection it is amusing to see the same charges levelled against Rembrandt – that his portraits were careless and overpriced – as have been made against the Elzeviers for their student dissertations. The Dutch were both discerning customers and careful with their money.

The only partial exception to this rule were the Orange courts and the States General, the two most powerful sources of institutional patronage in the Republic. In the case of the court, as we have seen with Rembrandt and Frederick Henry, this was as much a matter of creating an acknowledged elite of court painters, distinguished by the international prices Frederick Henry offered to home-grown talent. For the States General it was more a matter of rewarding political loyalty. In both cases the offer of rewards out of all proportion to the local market price was a means of shaping the creative market: and in both cases it succeeded.

So far, so very Dutch. Yet even within this world of intricate social relations, refined judgements and ferocious competition, there was still room for the eternal artistic dilemma, the tension between inspiration and book learning. In many ways this was particularly acute in a society as bookish as the Dutch Republic. At one end of the spectrum stood Pieter Saenredam, the ultimate scientific draftsman; at the other stood Rembrandt, the inspired genius, a prodigy who roamed across the boundaries of genre and specialism that had brought some order to a crowded market. Rembrandt's genius was much in demand, and there were many who hoped it might prove infectious: witness the premium rates he could charge the parents of his pupils. But the Dutch Republic also had limited patience with the other side of celebrity, the unpaid bills, the disorderly family life, and worst, undelivered paintings. In the end it would be Saenredam, with his precise geometric church interiors, who lived and died a solid citizen, surrounded by his many books, and Rembrandt who ended his life a solitary and diminished figure. That tells its own story about the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.

CHAPTER ELEVEN



Bookshop of the World

IN THE PREVIOUS CHAPTERS we have had the opportunity to marvel at the sheer number of books emerging from the print shops of the Dutch Republic: books, it seems, for all occasions, and for every pocket; serving every arm of government and every reading citizen. But this active, vibrant domestic market was only one aspect of the role that books would play in building the new state, and by no means the most obvious to those in other parts of Europe struggling to compete with Dutch traders. Indeed, most book industry professionals elsewhere in Europe would have been largely oblivious to the sheer extent of this vastly increased production, the largest proportion of which was wholly directed towards the home market.

This domestic market was only part of the Dutch story. The other essential part was the international trade in books. It was here that the Dutch first served, and then alarmed and angered their neighbours. English collectors had always looked abroad for high-quality books. In the sixteenth century these had come from France and Antwerp; now Amsterdam took over, flooding the London market with English Bibles. Paris had been used to enjoying a commanding presence in the international trade. But in the 1640s customers began to prefer the sleek polished editions of the Elzeviers, and the French book fraternity began to panic.

The English Bibles and French-language Elzeviers were a parable of Dutch success, but made up only a small proportion of the books the Dutch now sold into these markets. Only a very small proportion of the books published in the Netherlands were destined for export, and domestic production was very far from satisfying all the needs of Dutch buyers. Dutch collectors, as we will see, continued to look abroad for most of their requirements in many of the scholarly disciplines: serious works of jurisprudence, science, philosophy and medicine, for instance. The Dutch took such a commanding role in the international trade not through taking over the role of Basel in the production of medical texts, or Lyon's role in publishing standard works of jurisprudence, but by inventing a re-export trade. Dutch

traders would buy quality books in Germany and France, to ship on to England, Scotland and the Baltic, but also to ship German books to France, and French books to Germany. This, perhaps, was their greatest offence to titans of the book world in Paris, Venice and elsewhere. You could not challenge the established order so flagrantly and expect it to go unnoticed. The backlash began in earnest around the middle of the century, and had taken concrete form by the time the Dutch Republic was seriously embroiled in conflict with the emerging powers of the new era of international politics, England and France. But in the meantime Dutch customers had had fifty years during which they could feast upon the products of the European book world, brought to their doorsteps by Dutch booksellers and publishers. Just as Dutch traders in the East shipped home for their fellow citizens pepper and porcelain, parrots and fine carpets, the domestic market was enriched by the best and most sumptuous books that the mature European book world could manufacture. To Dutch collectors this meant almost unlimited opportunities to obtain the texts of their choice and build a fine library.

TO FRANKFURT

Almost since the beginning of print, the Frankfurt book fair had held a totemic place in the European book world. Twice a year, in March and September, booksellers and publishers from all over Europe descended on Frankfurt to show their new stock, and examine the books being exhibited by their competitors. Looking was almost as important as buying, for in the first century of print this was the primary way in which publishers assessed the design innovations they saw in books published elsewhere in Europe, and got a first sense of how these changes would play in the market. This function of Frankfurt as a laboratory of technical innovation is nicely symbolised by the bookseller who, despairing of making a decent living, switched to hawking baskets of spectacles round the stalls of the fair.

Frankfurt worked partly because its fairs were closely synchronised with the fair at Leipzig. As the closing bell rang after a week of frantic trading, exhibitors could pack up their remaining stock, and the books they had accepted in exchange for their own new titles, and hurry down to Leipzig. This worked well for at least a hundred years in the first era of printed books, and Frankfurt built itself into one of Germany's major printing centres on the basis of this trade. From the beginning of the seventeenth century,

however, Frankfurt gradually lost its lustre. The number of books traded fell absolutely, and Frankfurt also lost ground to its neighbour and competitor, Leipzig. By the end of the seventeenth century twice as many books were traded in Leipzig as in Frankfurt. This represented, to some extent, the German trade turning in on itself. Leipzig had always been a more parochial fair than Frankfurt, supplying mostly booksellers within Germany, and the lands to the east. Many of the international traders chose to go home, rather than go on to Leipzig after Frankfurt. The international trade could now function effectively without the emporium that had been Frankfurt; and that was partly because they now had Amsterdam.

The century during which the Frankfurt Fair was erased from the map of international trading (it would only reappear in its present form in the nineteenth century) was also, not coincidentally, the great age of Dutch expansion. Before the seventeenth century, the principal foreign dealers who frequented the Frankfurt Fair came from the established centres of the book world: Paris, Lyon, Basel and Geneva, Venice and Rome, and Antwerp. In the third quarter of the sixteenth century the Frankfurt Fair was almost synonymous with the great Antwerp publisher Christophe Plantin, for this was where he exhibited his new titles, and demonstrated his increasing dominance of the trade in fine Latin texts.¹ Plantin's successors continued the tradition after his death; up to the third decade of the seventeenth century there were still more books from Antwerp and Louvain traded in Frankfurt than from Leiden and Amsterdam.² But then the Dutch pushed on, and the Antwerp traders disappeared from the scene.

This changing of the guard, visible enough in the respective numbers of Amsterdam and Antwerp titles offered for sale in the Frankfurt sales catalogues, in fact tells only a small part of the story. The Dutch reconfiguration of Frankfurt was far greater than these raw statistics would suggest. For the Dutch were extremely circumscribed in the degree to which their domestic production could be offered for sale in Frankfurt. The regents of the fair were, in theory, required to examine the books brought to Frankfurt for their Catholic orthodoxy. In the sixteenth century, this obligation was undertaken with great laxity: the city preferred to maximise profits by facilitating the sale of Protestant books. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, the emperor made clear that this would no longer be tolerated. For the intra-German Protestant trade Leipzig offered a safer haven.

So Amsterdam traders went to Frankfurt mostly to buy, and they were in the market for far greater quantities of stock than could be paid for by the traditional mechanisms of exchange. In consequence, the Dutch changed

the terms of trade; they offered cash. This was not, as is sometimes suggested, a Machiavellian masterplan to squeeze the German dealers, but a pragmatic necessity. The Dutch shift to dealing in cash, rather than exchange, was simply a response to the fact that the range of books they could offer in return for books published in Germany was very restricted: most of their domestic Latin production was made up of Protestant texts, and there was little demand in Germany for books in Dutch.

Accidental this may have been, but its impact on the international book market was very profound. The Dutch publishers had deep pockets, and could buy big. But they could also drive a hard bargain. The fact that they were cash buyers gave them tremendous influence, because it was at precisely this moment that the German trade suffered most acutely from overstocking and a lack of liquidity.³ Books were piling up in the warehouses, expensively, and creditors were clamouring for payment. But if the Dutch were seen as potential saviours, they were also in a position to insist on deep discounts for bulk sales. The Dutch secured all the titles they needed for domestic consumption, but most of the profits that accrued came to Amsterdam and Leiden.

We can examine the impact of this colonisation of the German market through the happy survival of two stock catalogues published almost simultaneously in 1634, in Amsterdam by Johannes Janssonius and by Abraham and Bonaventura Elzevier in Leiden.⁴ The Elzeviers we already know; Janssonius was their nearest equivalent in Amsterdam, and a competitor for the business of collectors or professional people looking to build a serious library. The first thing we note is the huge size of their stock. Both Janssonius and the Elzeviers were offering for sale some 8,000 titles, three-quarters of them in Latin. They held stock in all of the major professional disciplines, as well as a significant amount of more recreational material: history books and works of neo-Latin poetry and literature. The second most striking feature of these catalogues is that a very high proportion of the works offered for sale were imported from abroad. The 1,200 works of jurisprudence offered in each catalogue were almost all printed abroad; the medical and theological works only marginally less so. Only among the history books and mathematical texts did domestic production make up a significant proportion of the titles on offer (around 20 per cent in each case).

Instead, Dutch buyers could feast on a judicious selection of texts sourced in all of Europe's major centres of scholarly book production. These included Basel and Geneva for theology and medical works, but also major Catholic printing centres, Paris, Lyon (particularly for its legal texts), and especially

Antwerp. The traditional centres of publishing in Italy, Venice and Rome were far less well represented, though Venice was still important as a source of new books in the field of medicine. Other Italian cities feature scarcely at all: a further demonstration, if one were required, of the extent to which Italy was in decline as a major force in the international book market. But the contributions from all of these markets were easily exceeded by the vast number of books furnished from publishing centres in Germany. Frankfurt, perhaps not surprisingly, is best represented, but there was also a wide range of titles published in Wittenberg, Cologne, Strasbourg and Leipzig. Major centres of German Protestant printing such as Herborn, Heidelberg and Giessen were also well represented; Tübingen and Hannover were particularly important in the provision of legal texts. Titans of the sixteenth-century German market like Augsburg and Nuremberg are less well represented, and Vienna scarcely at all. Even in the Holy Roman Empire the market had moved significantly northward. All told, German publishers account for over 50 per cent of the 6,000 Latin titles offered in each of these catalogues: a signifier both of the long-term shift in the centre of gravity of the European book world, from south to north, and of the enormous buying power of the new Dutch public.

It is also clear, however, that the books advertised in these two catalogues were not intended purely for domestic consumption. Conspicuously absent from both catalogues is more than a smattering of Dutch-language texts: there are none at all in the catalogue of Janssonius, a major player in the Dutch domestic market, and a rather random selection of eighty-three works in the titles offered by the Elzeviers, who were not themselves significant publishers of works in Dutch. The contents of these two catalogues points to their dual purpose: to satisfy the needs of the new Dutch professional classes for quality texts from abroad, and to build a client base outside the Dutch Republic. Even the domestically published titles hint at this, being precisely the sort of books published in the Republic likely to be of interest to clients abroad: major works of history, the Latin poetical, grammatical and literary works of the leading Dutch scholars, and works of mathematics, the major contribution of Dutch authors to the international world of science.

These catalogues make clear that even in the 1630s, the greatest Dutch publishers were well embarked on the penetration of the European book market that would be such a significant feature of the Dutch book industry in the seventeenth century. To the Dutch this was just good business sense, taking advantage of the low prices they obtained in Germany to supply customers around the growing markets elsewhere in northern Europe. But

to the hard-pressed local booksellers in these places, this trade began to take on a darker hue. To them this was a glaring example of the sort of predatory capitalism that would increasingly poison relations with traders abroad and turn former partners and friends into bitter foes.

FRANCE

Some time around 1670, Gabriel Nicolas De La Reynie, head of the Paris police department, despatched an urgent memorandum to the French minister of finance, Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Colbert was by this point well embarked on his work to bring order to the state's finances and revitalise its commerce. The challenge posed by the Dutch was at the forefront of his mind, and in this respect, De La Reynie's memorandum was timely. In a brief and penetrating analysis, De La Reynie explains why, in his view, the Dutch had been so successful in selling books into the French market. De La Reynie did not pull his punches. He acknowledged that Dutch workmanship was of superior quality and the typography generally excellent. But the Dutch also profited by their lack of moral scruples, by their willingness to print books 'for all sorts of sects, for and against any political positions, 'and against the most eminent persons'. De La Reynie admitted frankly that French booksellers had contributed to the demise of their industry by their desire for easy profits, preferring illegal Dutch reprints to domestic editions published under privilege in France: 'for all the books published in Holland had previously been published in France'. The situation had become so bad that De La Reynie thought the only solution was a general prohibition of Dutch imports. At the very least, the domestic industry should be protected by a rigorous enforcement of existing laws to prevent the circulation of banned books and the breach of existing copyright.⁵

How had it come to this? The catalyst for the Dutch invasion of the French book market seems to have been the Holland school order of 1625, that set out the reading programme for their Latin schools.⁶ This specified that the prescribed texts should be printed anew in special editions with an introduction and, where appropriate, with notes. The Elzeviers won a large part of this valuable business. Although these books were intended entirely for domestic consumption, the Elzevier school books also found admirers abroad. The Latin school curriculum was largely an international one. Cicero, Ovid and the *Disticha Catonis* were all as much staples of the syllabus in England and France as in the Low Countries: the principles of humanist education crossed all barriers of language and religious confession.

The celebrity of these Latin school texts in Paris probably took their publishers by surprise. These small pocket editions found a new clientele beyond the schoolroom, particularly with educated men who led busy professional lives. These lawyers and *parlementaires* admired the elegance and ingenuity of the compressed text.⁷ Their standard format made them collectable, and the new small size meant you could be seen in your carriage with your Suetonius without having to carry around something the size of a modern laptop. Since the smaller format reduced the costs of production by around 75 per cent, this could be a relatively unconsidered purchase and still leave a generous mark-up for the Parisian bookseller.

The success of the Latin school books encouraged the Elzeviers to begin publishing books specifically for the French market. Between 1625 and 1652, Abraham and Bonaventura published around one hundred editions in French, mostly literary works in their trademark pocket editions. The majority were reprints of the popular works by living or recent French authors, among them Pierre Corneille and Descartes. Corneille was a particular favourite, with at least fifteen different titles published under the Elzevier imprint, including five editions of his runaway success, *Le Cid*. Molière also provided good business, with no fewer than twenty-seven Elzevier editions to his name. The harmonious association of Dutch typographical style and French literary genius was encapsulated by the French author Jean-Louis Guez de Balzac, who celebrated his own election to the Elzevier pantheon with a famous hymn of praise to the printers: 'I have been made a part of the immortal Republic . . . Thanks to you, I am a neighbour of Pliny; sometimes I find myself beside Seneca, sometimes above Tacitus and Livy.' Here the book was envisaged as part of the extended family of great writers, classical and contemporary, created by the Elzevier brand.

This much-quoted encomium was, like so much about the Elzeviers, not quite what it seemed. It was written as an open letter to be published in the Elzevier edition of Balzac's collected works.⁸ In this respect, it was more a piece of gratuitous self-publicity, for both author and publisher, than a considered verdict on the Elzeviers' place in the literary firmament. By no means all the firm's French clients were as grateful as Balzac. The difficulty of reading the small font types was as frequently criticised in France as in the Republic, and French clients were not exempt from the Elzeviers' proverbial meanness to their authors. The brothers Dupuy were none too pleased when, having furnished a valuable manuscript to Johann Friedrich Gronovius to help him with his Elzevier edition of Livy, Gronovius was unable to reward them with a complimentary copy. Claudius Salmasius complained that he was forced to

spend half his salary buying copies of his own book, and Descartes chose another publisher in 1636 when the Elzeviers would not provide him with the 200 presentation copies he regarded as his due.⁹ But so powerful was the Elzevier brand that Descartes soon changed his mind. In future years, the Elzeviers would take considerable risks with the French censors to bring Descartes' work to the French public, and their edition of Rabelais, an author banned in France, was the first to be published for thirty-five years.¹⁰

This willingness to champion unorthodox authors caused ructions with the French authorities, but it did no damage to the Elzeviers' reputation: quite the contrary. Just as their sponsorship of Galileo in 1636 had opened doors to the European community of erudite scholarship, so the odd run-in with the French censors helped reinforce the firm's reputation. In many respects, this provided useful camouflage for the real Elzevier business model. The publication of French literature was only a fraction of their business in France. In the course of the century as a whole, French-language printing made up less than half of 1 per cent of the books published in the Dutch Republic. Dutch penetration of the French market, as De La Reynie recognised, had far more to do with the bulk supply of Latin texts than the Elzevier editions of Molière and Corneille. Many of these Latin books were published in the Netherlands, but by no means all. The French market was by far the largest and most valuable target for the Dutch re-export business. And when the market in Paris became intermittently uncomfortable, the Elzeviers bypassed the capital to deal directly with booksellers in the provinces. When the Amsterdam shop of Daniel Elzevier was wound up in 1681, the list of those who owed money to the Elzevier estate included booksellers in Amiens, Bordeaux, La Rochelle, Lyon, Montpellier, Montauban, Nîmes, Rouen, Saintes, Saumur and Vannes. There was also a total of no fewer than fourteen Paris establishments, collectively in debt for more than 5,000 gulden.¹¹

The Elzeviers succeeded not because of their superior workmanship (always questionable) or their relationships with authors (often difficult) but because they were prepared to test the boundaries. This applied to both their choice of texts and their business practice; and it was the latter that offered both the larger profits and the most flagrant provocations.

'BETTER BOOKS, SOLD BETTER CHEAP'

Not everyone was prepared to take this treatment lying down. In 1675, a London bookseller intervened to have 2,000 copies of an Elzevier edition of Hugo Grotius's *De Veritate Religionis Christianae* (*On the Truth of the*

Christian Religion) confiscated on its arrival in England. This was the climax of a long-running conflict with the Oxford bookseller William Webb over the rights to this internationally popular text. In March 1675, Daniel Elzevier was tipped off by a London contact of a plan to publish a new edition in Oxford. To pre-empt the market Elzevier hurriedly had a new consignment printed, all of which he sold to the London bookseller John Dunsmore. This outraged his original London contact, who now intervened to spoil Elzevier's plan.¹²

Elzevier's account of this complex network of dealings, now preserved in the British State Papers, is full of the usual injured self-righteousness, though it is hard to feel much sympathy. The instant provision of a huge new consignment was blatantly designed to crush local competition; Elzevier's mistake, and a clumsy one, was to cut his first confidant out of the deal by making the entire edition over to Dunsmore. What we see here is a classic form of the predatory capitalism that had now so coloured the Dutch reputation elsewhere in Europe. In this respect, the English market was one of the most vulnerable.

The English faced particular problems in the international book trade. From the first days of print (and indeed, before, in the manuscript era) the English had relied on imports to meet most of its domestic requirements when it came to scholarly and Latin texts. In consequence, the local publishing industry remained very small, and, uniquely in Europe, largely confined to a single centre of production: in London, the capital city, where it sat conveniently and sometimes uncomfortably close to the prying eye of the government authorities.

In the seventeenth century, as the economy expanded and England emerged as a major player in European politics, this situation began to look increasingly anomalous. The events of the Civil War disrupted the cosy cartel of London firms who bossed the book industry. Although attempts were made to restore the antebellum regulatory framework, English publishers had been awakened to new possibilities; and these included a fairer share of the scholarly market. It remained difficult to build a market abroad for English texts since no-one, besides a few merchants, had much command of the language. The Elzevier stock catalogues tell a grim story. The 1634 catalogue listed over 500 books in French and 300 in Italian, but only 7 in English. The 18,000 titles in the famous sales catalogue of 1674 included only 19 English books.

This was all the more frustrating as English scholarship was developing an increasingly wide readership beyond the Channel. This was true of both

English science and philosophy, and English contributions to Protestant theological and devotional writing. Yet this continued to bring little benefit to the publishing houses of London and Oxford. The problem was laid bare in a revealing exchange of 1685 between the London bookseller Samuel Smith and Johannes Janssonius van Waesberghe in Amsterdam. The two men had a long-established relationship through dealings in the Latin trade. Smith had recently offered Janssonius van Waesberghe a consignment of works by the biologist Martin Lister and the physicist Robert Boyle. Smith believed that at 10 stuivers a copy, these should find a ready sale in Amsterdam, but Janssonius was discouraging. A book of this size (nine small sheets) would normally retail for 2.5 stuivers; the English editions were far too expensive.¹³ This was not an isolated instance. Even in the eighteenth century the German bibliophile Zacharias von Uffenbach complained that Latin books sold in London were three times the price of those sold in the Dutch Republic.¹⁴

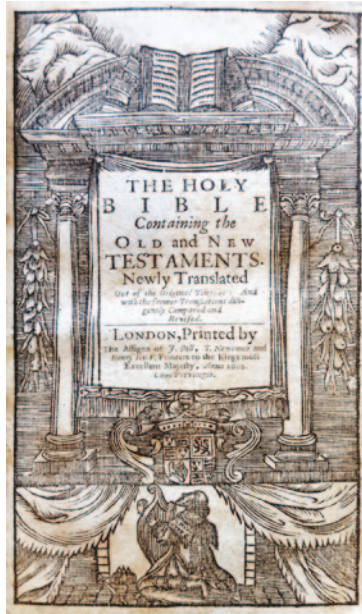
Dutch editions would always undercut the small, under-capitalised English industry. This was a market ripe for exploitation, and naturally the Elzeviers were well to the fore. Over the course of the century the various branches of the Elzevier business published books by some fifty English and Scottish authors, including many of the leading scholarly figures of the age.¹⁵ Many of these texts were sold back into England, the rest into the general European trade. It was frustrating but revealing that of the eight editions of Francis Bacon's milestone *De Augmentis Scientiarum* (*The Advancement of Science*) published in the seventeenth century, only the first was published in England, in 1623. Four further editions were issued in the Dutch Republic.¹⁶

We can gauge the penetration of the English market through a number of measures, none flattering to the English trade. Richard Davis for many years ran the largest bookshop in Oxford, before running into difficulties in the turbulent economic conditions of the late 1680s. His entire stock of 40,000 titles was gradually disposed of in four enormous sales.¹⁷ Of these, 14 per cent, or 5,600 titles, were published in the Dutch Republic; if one excludes the English-language works, the proportion rises to 25 per cent. One would have thought that English publishers would at least have commanded the local market in school texts, but the Davis catalogue includes a fairly full set of Elzevier, Janssonius and Blaeu Latin school books. These proved to be as popular in England as in France.

By far the most provocative part of this business was the Dutch publication of English Bibles. This was part of the larger trade in English piety that

had proved so controversial in the first half of the seventeenth century. Initially this was associated mainly with the English Separatist congregations, who ran their own presses, most famously the Leiden 'Pilgrim Press' of William Brewster and Thomas Brewer, though Giles Thorp at Amsterdam maintained his print shop for longer, and published many more editions.¹⁸ Dutch publishers were also keen to involve themselves in this work, if not for the Separatists, then for the many mainstream English puritans who at some point chose to settle in the Netherlands. Johannes Janssonius published extensively for William Ames, a distinguished theologian who held a Chair at Franeker; Matthew Slade was Rector of the Amsterdam Latin School and librarian of the Amsterdam municipal library, where many English émigrés went to meet their fellow countrymen. Janssonius promoted Ames's Latin works heavily at the Frankfurt Fair, and along with Jan Fredericksz Stam and the family Hondius, published a variety of texts for import back into England, a trade that quickened in the tumultuous years before the English Civil War.¹⁹

The Bible trade, which accounted for a large proportion of the sales, was dominated by a few specialists, most notably, in the first half of the century, Jan Fredericksz Stam. Contracts surviving in notarial archives record the shipment of 4,000, 6,000 and even 12,000 copies in a single consignment in 1642.²⁰ All of this was a huge source of frustration both for the English authorities and the London publishers. William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury and the doughty scourge of Puritanism, was so persistent in his efforts to disrupt the trade that the charges laid against him at his trial by the triumphant Parliamentarians (1641–1644) included that 'I used my power to suppress books in Holland'. Laud responded that this was absolutely necessary, 'for till this was done, every discontented spirit could print what he pleased at Amsterdam'. For all that, Laud recognised that the main reason why the imported Bibles proved so popular was their superior quality and lower price: 'For the books which came thence, were better print, better bound, better papers, and for all the charges of bringing, sold better cheap.' In Laud's pithy summation, which showed how well he understood the book industry, 'Would any man buy a worse Bible dearer, that might have a better more cheap?'²¹ Contrast this with the experience of John Canne, minister of the Separatist Church at Amsterdam who also ran the church's small press. Canne was a printer more out of a sense of duty, and not a craftsman. The small-format printing of the King James Bible he published in 1644 allegedly contained 6,000 errors, so bad, in the words of the contracted buyer, Edmund Blake, that 'they are not fit to be imported into England and ought



50 One of many English Bibles printed in Amsterdam, in this case with the false imprint of a well-known London consortium.

to be burned'. Blake refused to accept delivery of the edition and complained to Parliament.²² Those English authors who used established Dutch publishers like Janssonius fared much better.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, the main players in the trade were all located in Amsterdam: Steven Swart and his wife Abigael May, Joseph Bruyning and his wife Mercy, and the Jewish printer Joseph Athias. Jan Fredericksz Stam was succeeded by his son-in-law Jan Jacobsz Schipper and his wife Susanna Veseler. These publishers all knew each other, and their business models, very well. Although they often cooperated with one another, it was still a competitive trade. In 1670, Athias asked the States of Holland for a privilege on the printing of small-format English Bibles, which, to everyone's surprise, he received. Protests from his colleagues led to the withdrawal of the privilege, and the conflict was resolved by a negotiation resulting in a company established between Susanna Veseler and Athias, who were to publish English Bibles together. The contract drawn up specified that at the moment of the formation of this company, Veseler possessed 40,000 copies of English Bibles in various formats, and Athias possessed 13,000. The quantity produced was staggering. In 1688, Athias boasted that he had printed during his lifetime more than 1 million English Bibles.

Almost all the Bibles printed by the consortium in the 1670 and 1680s were printed anonymously or under false imprints of London, Cologne, Leipzig, Mainz and other places; or even falsely dated. William Nicholson, an Oxford student journeying through the Republic in 1678 on the orders of Joseph Williamson, the English Secretary of State, described Veseler's 'print house, where there were 18 hard at work printing, and 6 or 7 setting letters. They print many English Bibles of all sizes; upon the title-pages of which they sett – London printed by Robert Barker and the Assigns of John Bill etc.'²³ Disguising English Bibles in this way only added to the provocation and frustration of English competitors. The Dutch maintained a commanding role in the English trade until well into the eighteenth century, reinforced by a new network of Huguenot book dealers on both sides of the Channel. Between 1691 and 1780, 61 per cent of all unbound books imported into England came via the Dutch Republic; at the beginning of this period the proportion was undoubtedly much higher.²⁴

In London in the 1720s, Dutch booksellers introduced a new practice of fixed price sales as a variation of the established and more time-consuming auction sales, and this sent new tremors through the indigenous bookselling networks.²⁵ But there was little that could be done. The import of new foreign books remained a virtual Dutch monopoly until deep into the eighteenth century: a lucrative market that helped compensate for any contraction in the overall volume of trade elsewhere.

MR ELZEVIER PRESENTS

In 1678 the French scholar Louis Gorin de Saint Amour recorded a most agreeable journey undertaken in the company of Daniel Elzevier two decades earlier. Saint Amour had fallen in with Elzevier as the two men travelled back from Frankfurt to Amsterdam. Elzevier had noted the curious absence of a good French grammar, which he urged his travelling companion to undertake. The French scholar had for his part enlisted the services of another scholar, the Sieur de Mauconduit. Now, with the project accomplished, Saint Amour took the opportunity of the preface to salute 'Mr Daniel Elzevier of Amsterdam, a man celebrated for his abilities and for the beautiful volumes which he published'.²⁶

This was all very much in Daniel's style: the easy commerce with scholars and the assiduous cultivation of promising authors, and the restless travel. Daniel was a notable patron of Molière and a good friend of Nicolaas Heinsius, a less testing and more cosmopolitan figure than his father, whose

influence over the Leiden firm had proved so disruptive in the university community a generation before. But that was very much Daniel Elzevier's way, a valued friend to men of letters, a man to whom even the Duke of Montausier, the governor of the French Dauphin, might write offering his suggestions for future Elzevier editions. When Louis Gorin de Saint Amour penned his praising preface, Daniel was at the height of his powers: the undisputed master of the Amsterdam business, and a magnet for men of talent who would go on to make their own distinguished careers in the industry.

In 1674 Daniel would publish the single work for which he is most remembered. This was not, as with Plantin, a grand folio Bible, or the breathless showmanship of the Leiden Elzeviers' Galileo. Daniel's showpiece was a relatively unassuming duodecimo volume of some 770 pages. This contained the stock of his Amsterdam shop, which he now offered, with due deference, to Europe's collectors. The stock catalogue contained not a single book in the Dutch language; it was orientated entirely to the international scholarly market. Its impact was immediate and profound. Collectors all over Europe sought out a copy to guide their own collecting; the volume subsequently found its way into the libraries of numerous private collectors and institutional collections all over Europe (over fifty copies can be found in public collections today). The Bodleian Library in Oxford has four copies, including one donated by the canny Elzevier.²⁷ The timing of its publication was also significant. Two years before this, in 1672, the Republic had faced the existential crisis of the French invasion; the book market had all but seized up. Now the Elzevier catalogue proclaimed to everyone that the Amsterdam book world was once more open for business.

Elzevier's catalogue was indeed an extraordinary tribute to the resilience of Dutch commerce, listing in its neatly ordered pages over 18,000 editions in stock in Amsterdam. Hendrick Laurensz had already accumulated a stock of very considerable size in the 1640s, and Elzevier's stock was actually rather smaller than the 22,000 editions sold when the stock of Johannes Janssonius was liquidated after his death in 1664. These three enormous businesses, which neatly span the most extravagant age of Dutch expansion in the book trade, each have their particular focus. Whereas Laurensz was more orientated to the domestic market and Elzevier to the export trade, Janssonius was the great generalist, combining a large stock for the domestic market with a significant engagement with the trade in northern and eastern Europe. But if one strips out the vernacular sales, some patterns emerge which show that their underlying business strategies were not so very

different. Of the Latin stock, almost half, in all three cases, came from the Holy Roman Empire. When Louis Gorin de Saint Amour met Daniel Elzevier on the road from Frankfurt, Daniel had almost certainly been there to buy, rather than to sell. All three men carried an extensive French-language stock, of which over 80 per cent was imported from France (along with 20 per cent of their Latin books). Over 30 per cent of Elzevier's largest volumes (the folios) came from France; only 10 per cent were produced domestically. These fine imported books would certainly have been available to local customers, but the huge number of books imported from Germany were mostly intended for re-export. The Paris and Antwerp titles were similarly in high demand in England and Germany, as well as in Copenhagen and Stockholm.

With this we are coming close to understanding the secret of Dutch success. It is often thought that the Dutch flourished by elbowing their way into markets where they did not belong: publishing Molière in French, or English Bibles. But the real key to their prosperity lay in what they chose not to publish. The libraries of the great collectors in the Netherlands, assembled when the Dutch book trade was at its most buoyant, contain remarkably few books published locally. Serious books of scholarship, theological commentary, jurisprudence or medicine were still largely imported from the traditional centres of quality publishing around Europe. The Dutch established their domination of the international market by buying these books at source, often at highly advantageous prices, and selling them on. Dutch domination of the Frankfurt market was now so complete that in 1669 the Dutch traders threatened to boycott the fair altogether if the council would not relax regulations they found oppressive.²⁸ This access to cheap imports allowed Dutch publishers to steer clear of large projects where the risk outweighed the potential benefit. Instead, they concentrated their energies on areas of the trade where they enjoyed a natural domination: books for domestic consumption and the small-format Latin texts that were their hallmark contribution to the international trade. The Elzevier French editions have become a symbol of Dutch enterprise, but they were not in any way typical even of the Elzevier business model; and indeed, in the long run they may have done more harm than good by stirring up the protectionist instincts of the Parisian booksellers. The engine of the Dutch miracle was the stealthy appropriation of the market in everyone else's books, reinforced by massive production of reliable bestsellers: the Latin books in small formats, welcomed in every library and necessary in every schoolroom all over Europe.

LOOK NORTH

The Dutch incursions into the French and English markets were eye-catching and imaginative, but the greatest potential for expansion lay elsewhere, to the north and east. The Dutch had attracted attention and stirred controversy by intruding into the French and English vernacular markets, often in violation of local copyright; this caused upset and contributed to the growing sense of Dutch ruthlessness in trade. This intrusive vernacular publication was one aspect of Dutch involvement in the international book trade. The second was the sale of works published elsewhere in Europe, for instance Germany, and then re-exported from the Republic. There is little doubt, for instance, that the 5,000 texts from Germany stocked by Richard Davis in Oxford in the 1680s had mostly come via the Dutch Republic. The third and most comprehensive form of Dutch entrepreneurship abroad was the total takeover of a local market, both expanding the volume of books available and squeezing earlier-established local traders. This was increasingly the role of Dutch publishers in Scandinavia and the Baltic region.

In both England and France, the Dutch had faced a powerful and well-protected domestic industry; this limited the extent to which they could dominate the local trade. They faced few of these restrictions in Scandinavia; even in Germany, we see Dutch traders setting up their own bookshops and publishing stock lists in direct competition to the venerable Frankfurt and Leipzig catalogues. This was an audacious raid on what had been, in the first age of print, one of the true hearts of the new European print industry. Almost from the first days of print Dutch scholars had been keen to demonstrate that it was not Johannes Gutenberg who had invented printing, but a Dutch cutter of woodblocks called Laurens Janszoon Coster.²⁹ A statue of the great man erected in 1856 still towers over the town square in his home town of Haarlem. This imaginative rewriting of history never achieved much traction in the wider world, but in the seventeenth century the Dutch certainly evened the score. Even Gutenberg's heartland was not safe from their enterprise.

The greatest prize of the Dutch northern expansion was Denmark, and especially Copenhagen. Denmark was in the main a sparsely populated agricultural country, but there was serious wealth in the capital, and a local elite keen to play a role on the European stage. Copenhagen also boasted a distinguished mediaeval university, and a scholarly community well entrenched in international intellectual networks. This was an underdeveloped market ripe for exploitation. Whereas in France the Elzeviers had led the charge, the north would be an Amsterdam project; the Baltic, and

especially Copenhagen, would be the kingdom of the family Janssonius. Three generations of the Janssonius family would trade in Copenhagen, Stockholm, Danzig and beyond. They established their own shops in all three of these cities. And in the north the Dutch faced little of the government interference that had clipped their wings in France. In Paris, the Elzeviers were permitted only one visit of no more than three weeks' duration in any year, and the susceptibilities of the local booksellers always had to be respected.³⁰ This was not the case in Scandinavia, where for much of the first age of print the industry had been kept deliberately small, and very much under the thumb of the crown. Danes keen to build a collection had no choice but to look abroad, or have the Dutch bring books to them.

By 1635, the Janssonius family had established in Copenhagen their first shop outside the Netherlands. We have a fairly good view of the books they offered to their local clients from a series of printed stock catalogues that have survived in a single copy in the Royal Library in Copenhagen. This was a very considerable operation. The catalogue of 1636 lists around 2,300 titles, set out in the traditional faculties: around 600 works of theology, rather fewer books of medicine and jurisprudence, a nice section of historical and literary texts followed by small sections in vernacular languages, German, French and Italian. These were books to tempt both the serious collector and the walk-in customer. For such solid citizens, Janssonius was offering a range of



51 Copenhagen, a city grown rich from Denmark's control of access to the Baltic, whose inhabitants were now keen for the goods the Dutch brought in their ships – including books.

books the like of which had never previously been seen in the Danish capital. This was a service with which local booksellers simply could not compete. They complained that Dutch penetration of the market was depriving them of their livelihoods. In Paris such complaints had forced the Dutch to tread more carefully, but in Denmark they had little salience. In Copenhagen those in a position to intervene were themselves profiting too greatly from the opportunity to build their own libraries with Dutch help.

Wherever we look in the Danish book world, the impact of the Dutch invasion is obvious. In 1603 the university library contained just 700 books. This was little more than a worn-out collection of the classics of mediaeval theology, mostly printed before 1520: there had been scarcely any new titles added in the last fifty years.³¹ In the course of the seventeenth century this library would be totally transformed: to the point that in 1675 the librarian, Thomas Bartholin, himself a distinguished author of scholarly texts, was able to preside over the disposal of 3,280 duplicates and surplus stock. In the seven decades between these two catalogues the library had benefited from a sustained campaign of acquisition, mostly by donation. The library in Copenhagen, much like Edinburgh, another Protestant foundation situated on the periphery of the European book market, had become an object of considerable civic pride. In both places the habit of donation was encouraged by honouring the benefactor with a printed catalogue of their gifts: another type of print ephemera that has largely disappeared from view, but for the proud benefactors, a considerable source of local prestige.³²

In truth, giving to the library was rendered more attractive by the difficulties owners would otherwise have faced had they wanted to dispose of their collections elsewhere. Selling their books back to the Janssonius bookshop would realise only a fraction of their real value; holding such a dominant position in a small market, the Dutch were in a position to drive a hard bargain, and sellers had few alternative options. But from 1661 Copenhagen developed its own lively auction market, and from this point the local circulation of books became more efficient. These surviving auction catalogues also allow us to see quite how spectacularly large were some of the collections assembled, with Dutch help, by members of the Copenhagen elite. The collection of Thomas Bang, professor of philology, comprised some 5,500 books. His colleague Matthias Foss also built a superb collection, with Bibles, concordances and commentaries from all the major centres of European print. Foss, like many Danish scholars, had strong philological interests. His collection of texts in Hebrew and other ancient languages was particularly distinguished.

The largest collections were not confined to the university community. The king's counsellor (and sometime ambassador in the Dutch Republic) Justus Hoeg built a splendid library of topographical and historical texts. Hoeg had a large number of French texts, mostly from Paris, and one of the large number of sets of the Elzevier *Republics* found in Danish collections. Danish bookmen also avidly collected Dutch editions of the classic Roman authors in small formats. This was one area of the European market in which the Dutch had now developed a dominant position. Another was the market for serious scholarly work in Oriental languages, Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Syriac and Chaldean. The tradition of scholarship developed by Thomas Erpenius in Leiden now found its true place at the core of a thriving export market, providing scholars throughout the European university world with the volumes they required.

The Danish elite were careful collectors. A fascinating feature of the printed catalogues of the Danish collections brought to auction is the presence in them of many other book catalogues. We can find multiple copies of the first printed catalogue of Oxford's Bodleian Library, as well as several of the best-known Dutch collections. Danish collectors bought copies of Gabriel Naudé's classic French thesis on organising a library collection.³³ The Danish elite knew the value of emulation in building a library, and the Dutch could supply desired texts from any of Europe's major markets. By the end of the century, Copenhagen was home to one of Europe's most buoyant book markets, and many of its most exquisite collections.

SELLING THE *REPUBLICS*

We need to reserve a special place in our discussion for the *Republics*, one of the most celebrated outputs of the Dutch publishing industry, and certainly one of its most successful cultural exports. The *Republics* were a series of forty treatises on contemporary European territories and more distant lands, published in Latin by Bonaventura and Abraham Elzevier of Leiden and exported all over the continent. Most of the places treated in the series were not republics in the modern sense of the word: the series took its name from one of the first to be published, a reprint of Sir Thomas Smith's consideration of English government, *De Republica Anglorum*. Like this distinguished volume, subsequent volumes on France, Venice, Russia and so on would mix topographical description with an account of a polity's government and customs. Most *Republics* printed by the Elzeviers were not original works: Smith's work was first published in 1583, and many other *Republics*

also had sixteenth-century origins. In common with the small-format classical editions that had become the Elzeviers' hallmark, they were published in a petite 24mo. To market the treatises as a single series, the Elzeviers produced a complete list of the titles in their early stock catalogues, grouped under the heading 'the Republics'. The ploy worked, and they became some of the most collectable books of the seventeenth century.

The *Republics* could be sold as a complete set, but we often find them listed individually, or in twos and threes, in stock and auction catalogues. In the Netherlands copies were owned by lawyers, statesmen and officials, but also on occasion by ministers and university professors, and these buying patterns were maintained when they were offered abroad. The evidence from book industry sources suggests that they enjoyed a formidable reputation among collectors throughout Europe but perhaps particularly in the northern markets, England, Denmark and the Baltic.

Yet here lies the paradox. The *Republics* recur constantly in auction catalogues to the end of the century and beyond. Yet the last volume in the series was printed in 1641, and none was reprinted thereafter; in fact, for the overwhelming proportion of books in the series there was never more than one edition. There were three editions of Sir Thomas Smith and two rival accounts of Venice (many collectors bought both); for most of the rest the first edition was deemed sufficient. The coverage of the series was also somewhat uneven. Volumes on Savoy and a couple of rural Swiss cantons, not surprisingly, sold far less well than China and Russia, and usually appear only in the most complete sets. There is no volume at all on the Southern Netherlands, which true Dutch patriots might have chosen to think of as a subject Spanish territory, rather than an interesting culture in its own right.

For all the excitement they caused among collectors, this seems to have been a totally different sort of market popularity than, for instance, Adam Westerman's *Christelijcke Zee-vaert*, a book which, as we have seen, went through ten editions before we encounter one of which a single copy survives.³⁴ The *Republics*, in contrast, survive remarkably well, and often in pristine condition. These were treasured possessions, but not in fact easy to use. Published in such a small format, with a tiny typeface, they are not the sort of book with which one could easily settle down for an evening of reading, particularly reading by candle-light and with primitive spectacles. The volumes are only 4 inches (10 cm) tall and, like most 12mos and 24mos, often very tightly bound. The binding is easily cracked with relatively minimal use. The book cannot easily be held open, and the readers would certainly lose their place reaching for a glass of wine or writing notes (in fact

remarkably few of the surviving copies contain any annotation). For the purpose of consultation or study, there were many more serviceable guides to foreign lands and customs, which may explain the success of Olfert Dapper's lavish but utterly derivative surveys of exotic foreign locations published in the 1660s and 1670s.³⁵

The *Republics*, though small, were not particularly cheap. In 1661, one *Republic* in the collection of a Danish professor sold for 4 Danish marks, the equivalent of 2 Dutch gulden.³⁶ This was four times the price of other Latin 24mos of similar length. One is led to the conclusion that the *Republics* were valued more for their exquisite workmanship and bravura design than for actual reading. They were certainly convenient, for both travel and export. A complete set would take up less than 3 feet of shelving, and could easily be boxed up for travel. The complete sets, or runs of thirty that appear so often in auction catalogues in Copenhagen and elsewhere, may be evidence less of multiple purchases than of the same treasured set passing from owner to owner.³⁷ The Elzeviers had pulled off an enviable publishing coup: a series that collectors valued, and were eager to purchase the latest additions to as they appeared through the 1620s and 1630s, when the Dutch were first experiencing a sense that they could command the world; and, of course, enjoying the proof that their own republic was far superior to the system of government in other often much longer-established polities. But one can imagine that many of the texts so proudly displayed in the study, left lying strategically in the drawing room or carried to a social gathering (though hopefully not to church) were valued more for what they said about the owner than for the text. Many, it must be said, were magnificently bound for such small volumes. This was an artefact that in many ways epitomised the qualities of the Dutch Republic itself: ingenious, beautifully crafted, and with a sly awareness of the psychology of affluent consumers.

THE SPOILS OF WAR

For the best part of twenty years, the Swedish crown was able to pursue a collecting policy almost unique in Europe. As Swedish armies made their triumphant progress across Germany, they simply appropriated libraries and shipped them back to Stockholm; sometimes this plunder continued its journey to Uppsala to stock the university library.³⁸ The spoils of war always played a role in the redistribution of Europe's cultural capital, and in this case the Swedes were only following the baleful example of the Habsburg armies, who, when conquering the Palatinate, had removed the fabulous

library of Heidelberg University to Rome – where it still remains, in the Vatican Library. The only problem for the Swedes was that most of this booty consisted of Catholic texts, so plugging the gaps required the purchase of some righteous Protestant theology. Naturally, the Dutch were on hand to oblige.

The first to establish a presence was the Leiden bookseller Jacob Marcus, who in 1631 received a privilege to publish on behalf of the king small-format editions of the Swedish Bible. This was a tribute to Marcus's assiduous cultivation of Swedish scholars, but also an embarrassing acknowledgement of the underdeveloped state of the local industry.

The Elzeviers had not given up on the north. Isaac Elzevier had been drawn into the Danish market by a request to supply books to the newly appointed university printer in 1622, and a decade later both the Leiden Elzeviers and Janssonius took booths in the trading emporium recently established by king's command close to the royal palace.³⁹ Johannes Meursius, the Leiden academic who had retired to Denmark after the Remonstrant controversy, clearly used the Elzeviers to build his collection, and Louis III Elzevier travelled to Denmark to meet him on several occasions. But there is a clear sense that the northern market never commanded the same attention as England and France. The catalogue of the Elzevier shop in Copenhagen published in 1642 contained only a third as many books as that issued in the same year by Janssonius, who by this point had established himself at the heart of the Danish book market, the stalls situated rather quaintly in the city church. From 1650 the Elzeviers largely disappeared from Denmark.

Sweden was rather different. The stocking of the Uppsala University Library relied heavily on editions sourced from Leiden and Amsterdam. Here the professors relied not only on the bookseller Jacob Marcus, who peddled his wares in Stockholm, but also on agents of their own, active in the Netherlands. The accession of Queen Christina excited brief hopes of a new intellectual golden age, and for a time both Isaac Vossius and Nicolaas Heinsius decorated her court. This naturally set the Elzevier antennae twitching, and Vossius in particular was keen they should set up a local branch office. But nothing came of this and, for the most part, the Elzeviers were content to sell their books in Sweden through third parties. Once again, it was Janssonius who dominated the market. In 1647, a royal privilege granted him permission to set up bookshops in both Stockholm and Uppsala, as well as a print shop in the capital.⁴⁰ Catalogues survive from the Stockholm shop for 1651 and 1652. For ten years, his representative in

Sweden was the ambitious young German bookseller Henricus Curio, who would cause Janssonius some trouble when, on the expiry of the royal privilege, he decided to strike out on his own. A flirtation with the Elzeviers brought more mischief than profit, and Curio's lustre was soon so tarnished that the university dispensed with his services. The Elzeviers continued to deal through local booksellers, but without the sustained engagement that characterised the Janssonius clan. Both firms, though, along with the Blaeus, maintained accounts with the Amsterdam Exchange Bank, mandatory for an exchange transaction above 600 gulden and so essential for businesses engaged in the international trade.

With all due respect to the Swedish crown, Stockholm was always something of a sideshow. The greatest prize of Dutch eastern expansion was the huge German market. By the late seventeenth century, the Frankfurt book market was in terminal decline, so the Dutch founded their own German entrepôt in the Baltic city of Danzig. Protestant Danzig, close to a variety of different confessional markets, was already home to the Baltic grain trade, most of which was in Dutch hands. Grain ships bound for Amsterdam might return in ballast, so they might as well bring books. By the 1680s, the Amsterdam firm of Janssonius van Waesberghe was already issuing a regular stock catalogue for its Danzig shop. These are remarkable documents. They begin with a selection of Catholic theological titles. There then follow Lutheran theological books, before progressing through the scholarly faculties and vernacular titles. This, at first glance eccentric, organisation for a Dutch Protestant business was the classic organisational structure of the Frankfurt Fair catalogue. The statement of intent could not have been more obvious.

Given the relative paucity of Catholic devotional staples published in Amsterdam, these catalogues were necessarily a pan-European selection. But by now these lists were also well salted with Latin texts published in the Dutch Republic, often in the characteristic small formats in which the Dutch were unchallenged market leaders. The Dutch could also offer to their German customers a considerable number of German books published in Amsterdam. This was the specialism of another Amsterdam interloper, the bookseller Joachim Nosche.⁴¹ Nosche, originally from Pomerania, was a publisher orientated exclusively towards the German market: his impressive list of clients included booksellers in Danzig, Stettin, Stralsund, Greifswald, Bremen, Copenhagen, Hamburg, Lübeck and Cologne. Nosche specialised in cheap German devotional texts, printed in Amsterdam at his shop on the Haarlemmerstraat and exported in massive consignments. In a long career

as printer, he published German Bibles and psalm books in repeat editions. It turns out there was a larger than expected domestic market for books in German: by far the largest proportion of the Republic's large population of immigrant workers came from the border lands of north-western Germany. Many opted to settle in the Republic permanently; from the 1640s to the 1680s these provided a reliable clientele for Nosche's publications.

We know most about Nosche's business from an inventory compiled by his widow, as she looked to draw down the stock. The inventory reveals about eighty separate titles, all in German, and exclusively devotional in content. The inventory does not date the editions, or offer an indication of prices, but it does indicate how many copies of each title remained in stock: 2,025 Prussian songbooks in 24mo, 3,681 psalm books in 12mo, 737 New Testaments in 12mo, and another 13,171 unbound German catechisms, devotional tracts and school books. The inventory also included a list of 4,399 books recently sent by Nosche to the Königsberg bookseller Christoffel Brachvogel, all yet to be paid for. Dutch booksellers like Nosche also dealt extensively with the German population of Riga; in book trade terms, the Baltic was now a Dutch sea.

The climax of this extraordinary journey of colonisation came in the early eighteenth century, when the Janssonius clan took their business to the heart of the German book trade in Leipzig. Two stock catalogues survive, from 1706 and 1707, advertising the family as booksellers in 'Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Danzig and elsewhere'. We know from the stock catalogues of Johannes Janssonius earlier in the century that this 'elsewhere' had at different times encompassed shops in Berlin and Königsberg as well as Copenhagen, Stockholm, Geneva and Lyon.⁴² The firm now offered to the booksellers gathered at Leipzig a selection of the most recent Amsterdam titles, along with classic staples of seventeenth-century publication. The Dutch Golden Age might by this point have lost some of its lustre, but not when it came to books. The book trade, the Republic's most successful cultural export, roared on.

AN ODE TO COLLECTING

One notable feature of Dutch engagement with these foreign markets is the utter domination of Amsterdam and Leiden. These two cities between them supplied 75 per cent of the books published in the Netherlands that were sold abroad. Dutch brokers also made themselves useful supplying books published elsewhere: some Danish collections contained almost as many

books published in Antwerp as in Amsterdam, and many of the French books decorating Danish collections also passed through Amsterdam. These new markets were a tribute to Dutch business acumen, but they did not come at the neglect of their own domestic markets. While Janssonius and Elzevier were scurrying around Stockholm and Copenhagen, London and Paris, their local customers were certainly not neglected.

We can usefully conclude this investigation by asking how easy it would have been to build a library in the Republic's own provinces beyond metropolitan Holland: in Gelderland, Overijssel and Drenthe, Groningen and Friesland to the north, and the islands of Zeeland. Here customers were not as thick on the ground. Certainly, too, they did not have the disposable income of the elite customers in Amsterdam and abroad. But if customers in Zwolle and Zutphen could not rely on Daniel Elzevier's personal attention, they still seemed able to avail themselves of all that was available in the bookshop of the world.

Here it is important to remember that most of these places had a functioning book market of their own. This was not England, where the print trade was wholly concentrated in London. On the contrary, most Dutch provincial cities supported one or more printing houses, and up to a dozen bookshops. Groningen, as we have seen, could generate enough business, mostly from official customers, to sustain five printing offices. Most of these provincial firms were careful not to compete with the giants of Amsterdam and Leiden. If they did publish substantial books, they were normally either books with a specific local market (the laws and customs of Friesland) or the work of a favourite local theologian, professor or celebrated erudite. These works also had their appeal in the wider market. Particularly the theological works of the professors of Franeker, Groningen and Utrecht, found an interested public both in Holland and abroad. Many of the Eastern European Calvinist churches greatly preferred the stringent orthodoxy of these faculties to the dangerous lassitude, as it was perceived, of Leiden. Students sent to study in these northern universities from Hungary or Poland were an important continuing market for books published in Groningen or Franeker, particularly as they often rose to positions of influence in their home societies.

These then were important centres of print production in their own right, and for those living, working and studying outside the major Holland cities, access to books seems to have been relatively smooth, with the local booksellers acting as intermediaries. The estate of Daniel Elzevier was owed money by booksellers in Arnhem, Deventer, Nijmegen and Zutphen in the

east; in Middelburg and Den Bosch, and by no fewer than eighteen businesses in Utrecht. In the north there were debts to be settled by eleven booksellers in Franeker and Groningen, and even 4 gulden owed by Isaac Pietersz Santema in the small Frisian town of Dokkum: this could perhaps have been written off. Often, as in this example, the sums were not large, but they included two debts of over a thousand gulden in Utrecht, a clearing house for points east as well as an important market.⁴³ We have no similar document for Janssonius, but it is likely that his network would have been, if anything, more extensive.

Living in Groningen, Deventer or Middelburg, it was perfectly possible both to keep in touch with the latest titles and to build a library. We know from newspaper advertisements that catalogues for book auctions held in Leiden or Amsterdam were commonly available in cities like Groningen, Middelburg and Leeuwarden. Groningen itself had a lively local auction market as well, and there is also extensive data that can be trawled in the local archives. This archival data is especially helpful with respect to student collections. Assessing how many books students would buy is particularly difficult, largely because they would either go on to build large collections over a long career, or their collections would not be large enough to justify a separate auction. In Groningen students were allowed to add their books to any of the weekly auctions; this was highly efficient in ensuring the smooth circulation of textbooks, but leaves us with frustratingly little data. But from inventories in the Groningen archives we know that Mellerus Wabbens, who died in 1638, left fifteen books, mostly theological books in Latin. His near contemporary Johannes Mignon left a far larger collection of 120 items, including music books and a collection of theses. Other Groningen students had purchased books in Greek and Hebrew.⁴⁴

Young men were encouraged to get into the habit of collecting early. Those who stayed in Groningen and built their careers locally often assembled a library of very considerable size. From surviving auction catalogues we know of twenty collections of 500 or more, and ten of over 2,000 titles. Naturally the professors of the university tended to have the grandest libraries, but jurists, members of the local aristocracy and local ministers also built substantial collections. One of the most interesting of these collectors was the nobleman Reinoldus Alberda, a prominent member of the Ommelanden Lords. The council of Ommelanders held sway over the rural countryside of Groningen and made up half of the States of Groningen, in which they bickered, incessantly, with their counterparts, the bourgeois magistrates of the city of Groningen. The Ommelanders could be stubborn

and obtuse, and inclined when pressed to reach for their weaponry. But they were certainly no ignorant country bumpkins. Alberda, lord of Zandt, built an exquisite collection of more than 4,500 titles.⁴⁵ All the normal faculties were represented, but the highlight was a superb collection of both jurisprudence and history. In the search for precedents, so important for holding the expansionary pretensions of the city at bay, Alberda would have been a recognised authority.

Alberda, one of the Groningen delegates to the States General, would have had plenty of opportunity for book shopping on his journeys south, but the collection is still remarkable. One of its most striking features, apart from the 407 historical folios, is the high proportion of his books published in the Netherlands. In some legal or theological collections assembled during the century the proportion of domestically published works falls as low as 10 per cent; here it is 45 per cent. There was a respectable number of local Groningen imprints, but over half were from Leiden or Amsterdam. Alberda provides definitive proof that, by 1692, it was possible to build an exquisite collection relying largely on the work of domestic publishers: particularly if, as in this case, a high proportion of the books were in vernacular languages. Alberda was a shining example, but by no means a total exception. Among the collections brought to auction in this same year were the library of a Frisian delegate to the Admiralty of Amsterdam, two noblemen and the secretary of the States of Friesland. In 1697 the collection of Rutger van den Bossche, lord of Beusichem, in rural Gelderland, would also be sold.⁴⁶ Van den Bossche was a serious collector of works of heraldry, numismatics and emblem books, genres that were specialisms more of the Catholic market outside the Dutch Republic. For most of his large formats he also looked to Paris, Venice and Frankfurt. But overall, 30 per cent of this collection of 1,075 titles was supplied by domestic publishers.

Reinoldus Alberda was a local patriot, and would have been proud that his collection was both assembled and sold in Groningen. But this was by no means the largest collection to go under the hammer in the northern capital. This distinction belongs to the library of Jacques Oisel, professor of law. When Oisel died in 1686 he had assembled a collection of some 14,000 books.⁴⁷ Preparing the catalogue took the best part of two years; the sale became a national event, and a focus of considerable local scholarly pride. To celebrate the occasion, the local poet laureate, Johannes Mensinga, was commissioned to provide a printed verse celebration of Oisel's library – the only occasion, to our knowledge, that the sale of a library was honoured (and advertised) in this way.⁴⁸ Oisel's library was remarkable in many ways,

not least that he had assembled the largest collection of auction catalogues ever recorded in the catalogue of a personal library, over three hundred items, drawn from all over Europe. Much as in Copenhagen, it made sense for a serious collector in a place like Groningen to track the market in this way. The aftershocks were still being felt in the following decade, when the Oisel auction catalogue was reprinted three times, in 1690, 1692 and 1698. Oisel had joined the small number of 'catalogues of record' that were regarded as essential reference works for serious collectors throughout Europe. Some copies of the 1692 reprint are marked up with the prices paid at the sale four years before. But here appears one wrinkle in the outpouring of local Groningen pride, for although the auction was held in the north, all four editions of the catalogue were printed in Leiden. Old habits died hard; and, for the very best, it was sometimes necessary to return to the most sophisticated practitioners.

CHAPTER TWELVE



The Art of Collecting

MOST OF US, AT some point, complain about our jobs. It is easy to believe that our talents are not recognised and we do not receive the remuneration that we deserve. We may grumble and mutter, but few of us will publish a book about it. That, however, was the response of one minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, who in 1658 published a short tract with a title that left little to the imagination: *Bewys, dat het een predicant met zyn huysvrouw alleen niet mogelijck en is op vijfhondert guld. eerlijck te leven* (*Proof that it is Impossible for a Minister and His Wife to Live on 500 Gulden a Year*).¹ Like other ministers of the established church, the author was a privileged civil servant, his salary paid with commendable regularity by the town authorities. But this was no fortune: 500 gulden was scarcely more than the average household income in the Dutch Republic. Many successful craftsman households would have brought in this sort of money. Despite his superior education, and unless our author had been sent out to one of the poorer rural parishes, when the pastor mounted his pulpit on a Sunday he might be looking down on a congregation in which there were many who found it easier to make ends meet than he and his wife.

Perhaps it was too many petty humiliations of this nature which had inspired our minister to reach for his pen. In a succinct four pages, the anonymous author (the place of publication suggests he worked in or around Delft) presented a scrupulously laid-out balance sheet detailing his expenses for the year. For food, meat, fish, bread, butter, vegetables and spices (butter was something of a luxury, consuming as much as the family spent on meat), he allowed 220 gulden. Then there was 40 gulden for peat and firewood, and 12 for candles. Clothing was expensive, and provision had to be made for replacing worn-out furnishings. The minister was clearly not in difficulties because of a fondness for alcohol, since the budget allowed only 50 gulden for beer and wine (a fraction of the tax-free allowance he would have enjoyed as a student). Perhaps as a result, the minister and his wife were clearly in good health, since only 10 gulden was set aside for the doctor, apothecary

and barber. This was a family without children: and since the salary was already 47 gulden overspent, the author, in a terse closing commentary, reflected that had they had children they would undoubtedly have lived in abject poverty. This was a budget with little room for luxury or indulgence, and crucially almost no room for books. Our author allowed only 25 gulden to meet all the household needs for books, paper, ink and newspapers.

This presents us with a paradox. As our anonymous minister presented his case (and it struck a sufficient chord to demand an almost immediate reprint), there was no possibility that a man so placed could furnish himself with a decent library. At 500 gulden a year the salary of our anonymous complainant was very much in line with the current ministerial norm. Yet we know that many ministers built very substantial collections of books. They bought books as students, and they continued collecting throughout their careers; and this was often when they were also scraping together the funds to educate their children. The median size of the ministerial collections auctioned in the Dutch Republic during the seventeenth century was around 850 books, and these were not only the collections of men serving the major city churches. That is not to say that all ministers had this many

(1)

B E W Y S,

Dat een

P R E D I C A N T

Met zyn

H U Y S V R O U W

Alleen niet mogelijk en is op vijf hondert guld.
Eerlijk te leven, Want hy nootlaec-
kelijk 's laers dit volgende
van doen heeft.

A En Byoot	36
En twee vierendeel Water met den Tim- post	28
En vleesch / foo koepe / witte / groene / Soemelken en wat Idrene Boen	4
En een vierendeel van een Oye een half / Darden / vier Buiten a 2 gulden / acht Hoenderen a 5 stuyvers / tien pare Duyben a 1 stuyvers het paer / drie en derigh pont Ganspot	50
En haasche ende gefante Wy / stochts / Wa- ringh	20
En vyfen twintich pont Gist / Haber en Goye	5
En Etweten en boonen / foo groen en droogh	4
Somma	167

en

52 Our anonymous minister has clearly devoted much thought to the sadness in his life and this strange little publication became popular enough to merit a second edition. Here we see the cost of bread, butter, meat, cereals and grains carefully enumerated.

books – those whose collections justified a separate auction were a small fraction of the whole. But these are certainly larger collections than those of other professional groups such as doctors.

How are we to square this circle? The answer lies in the differential between the nominal wage or salary and total amount of money coming into a seventeenth-century household. For artisans the opportunities for such additional earning were extremely limited, and income was in any case far more erratic. In the case of officials or regents, the opportunities to obtain such additional income were very numerous: this is how they became so ostentatiously, and sometimes scandalously, rich. Virtually every service provided by officials, whether posting up a notice or paying out fees authorised by the local treasury, could be facilitated by a cash payment. This was why these offices were so coveted. The position of the clergy was somewhere between these two extremes. Ministers usually enjoyed free accommodation, often in a spacious house with spare rooms that could accommodate lodgers. Urban ministers could make additional income by taking in students, either boarding in the family home or coming by for tuition after school. It would have been considered unseemly for the minister's wife to work, but managing the household was a not insubstantial task and the garden could be cultivated for produce. Food bills might be further reduced by gifts from grateful parishioners. If our Delft minister's wife had kept a cow, and churned the butter, that would have been another 48 gulden to spend on books.

Ministers were often themselves involved in the publishing world, as authors, translators or correctors. A grateful publisher might allow them one or two titles from stock by way of compensation for help in the printshop. A wealthy parishioner might lend books that then never found their way back to their absent-minded owner. Free copies of the ministers' own works could be gifted, or exchanged, in return for the works of others. Former students might offer a copy of their own books or dissertation theses; sometimes a proud parent would want the minister to know how well their children had turned out. In all of these ways, it might be possible to grow a collection beyond what might appear possible for someone in their income bracket. If you are always around books, books come your way. This is the art of collecting.

In the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, more citizens than at any earlier time in history brought books into their homes, whether consciously as part of a collecting strategy or for purely pragmatic reasons. Publishers understood the opportunity, and the nuanced balance between need, desire,



53 The minister in his study. The clergy had an occupational need to buy books, but a fine library was also an investment.

and disposable income among a varied clientele. The Dutch book industry succeeded because it found ways to address the needs of all those who had the disposable income to buy any books at all.

BOOKS FOR ALL POCKETS

In 1647 the Amsterdam publisher and bookseller Hendrick Laurensz published a catalogue of his very extensive stock.² This in itself was not exceptional; what was unusual, and for us extremely helpful, was that on this occasion he chose to print prices alongside the listed titles. The entries in this catalogue are fairly laconic and seldom give details of the place or date of publication; they can, however, often be matched with the much fuller entries in the catalogue prepared for the auction of stock held two years later, after the publisher's death. Together they offer an exceptionally vivid snapshot of the state of the market at its mid-century zenith, for Laurensz

was a successful publisher who served all parts of the market: scholarly and vernacular, rich and less affluent.

This was the Dutch book world in all its rich profusion and variety, 8,300 titles ranging in price from 1 stuiver up to 200 gulden. All of these books, some very precious, others entirely ephemeral, are ranged together in subject and alphabetical order, the Hebrew grammars bumping up, somewhat incongruously, against cut-price Cicero, the psalm books next to bawdy song collections. Scanning the pages can be as daunting as searching for the right part in a hardware warehouse, but with the help of the printed prices, we can begin to impose some structure on this teeming marketplace. Laurensz's 8,300 titles can be divided into four approximate price bands. At the cheapest end are a range of titles available for 4 stuivers or less. These short cheap texts were surprisingly various: for a couple of stuivers, which could otherwise buy you a tankard of beer, you could buy a Juvenal in 24mo, Erasmus's *Colloquia* and a whole range of theological pamphlets including the *Christian ABC* and a book of spiritual songs. These sorts of books allowed those with relatively modest incomes a stake in the book world, though that is not to say that customers with deeper pockets would not also have bought cheap texts like these. On the contrary, those in the higher income brackets probably constituted the most reliable market for even the cheapest books.

The largest number of titles comes in the second category, costing between 5 stuivers and 2 gulden. Most Dutch devotional works sold for less than 15 stuivers, in octavo and smaller formats; popular quarto histories and adventure stories sold between 2 and 12 stuivers. Here one finds also cheap vernacular travel literature, and quite a variety of Latin works. Most of the works of the poet and scholar Caspar Barlaeus retailed for less than 10 stuivers. For the collector with an interest in Remonstrant theology, Laurensz stocked at least fifteen titles by Conradus Vorstius, all of which sold for less than 1 gulden. (With Vorstius so well represented, Hendrick Laurensz might have hesitated to share the catalogue with his brother, a leading Contra-Remonstrant minister in Amsterdam, best known as Jacobus Laurentius.) Books in this price bracket would have been an occasional purchase for a household of average income (500 gulden a year), and also made up the solid bulk of the library of the first segment of serious collectors, such as ministers and jurists.

Such men would also have aspired to own a number of texts in the third price bracket, between 2 and 20 gulden. Books of this sort would have involved a considered outlay for all but the richest collectors, and, with the possible exception of a family Bible, were out of the question for those

possessing only a few books. This more select category of books included increasing numbers of folios and books with significant illustrations. A folio chronicle cost 6 or 7 gulden, a Livy in folio 10 gulden; the famous emblem collection of Zacharias Heyns was priced at 3 gulden and 10 stuivers. Since these prices were for the unbound sheets, further investment would have been required before the owner had an artefact fit to display to friends.

Books that sold for above 20 gulden were a select group, and intended only for collectors with almost unlimited resources. A scholar who for some reason wished to have the Paris edition of Augustine's works would have to lay out 100 gulden, an expenditure probably best left to an institutional library. Institutional libraries certainly collected with this purpose in mind, and for this reason their collecting strategies also earn a place in our account of collection building.

We can use this rough banding to map four equally amorphous groups of collectors. The first group consists mostly of neophyte owners, first-generation book-buying households on the average family income or below. The second group is comprised of the more educated men who read and bought Latin books, and members of the learned professions for whom books were a professional necessity. Serious collectors, scholarly or otherwise, made up the small number in the third rank, leaving a select top layer of the very rich, for whom the accumulation of books was as inevitable as the accumulation of tapestries, houses and servants. Of course, these categories are not water-tight. Someone in a lower income bracket might save up for a much-desired and expensive text; bigger collectors owned many cheap books. Households comprised a number of individuals of differing tastes and different levels of literacy and education. But this four-level structure does provide a decent point of entry into the varied world of the book collector, and all that went into building a library.

As we have seen in our discussion of artists' libraries, the smallest collections are always the most difficult to reconstruct. Inventories of personal property reveal that craftsmen and small independent traders (and we can count artists in this category) often had twenty or thirty books in their homes at the time of their death. These are usually described only in the most general terms: 'thirty books' or 'some old books in a chest'. Individual titles are only enumerated if the books had special value: the family Bible or a *Book of Martyrs*. We have seen in the case of Rembrandt that this accounted for five of his twenty-two books.

What we can say of these small collections is that they were essentially pragmatic. Besides books that came into the house through inheritance or

gift, each book bought was a considered purchase, weighed against other uses of the same carefully husbanded disposable income: a new pair of shoes, or a replacement cooking pot. Expenditure on books in such collections would normally have been justified by their utility, professional or spiritual. Craftsmen bought books that were necessary for their work, or for the spiritual health of their family. Only in times of unusual excitement or turbulence were they likely to be tempted by news sheets or polemical pamphlets; and some works of this sort they might have come by for free. But there is no doubt that these were serious reading folk, and the printed word played a large part in their lives. In aggregate, these collections of twenty or thirty much-thumbed titles offered an enormous marketplace for the Dutch book industry.

This becomes immediately clear when we delve into the Dutch titles offered in the two Laurensz catalogues of 1647 and 1649. The best indication of what sort of books sold well in the mass market is to look for titles or types of book that Laurensz kept in stock in many different editions. Here six groups stand out: Bibles, psalm books, songbooks, catechisms, cheap devotional texts and *cijfer-boecken*. In 1647 Laurensz offered no fewer than fifteen different *cijfer-boecken* for sale. This was a purchase that could be justified as a professional necessity, either for training up the son of the family or as a mute helpmate for the keen autodidact striking out on his own. Some of the most profitable books on the market, then as now, were texts that had a place in both the educational curriculum and a wider market beyond. *Cijfer-boecken* fell into this lucrative category.

A prudent shopkeeper would probably also want to have to hand a table of interest rates, available from Laurensz for a frugal 3 stuivers. This was the cheapest of no fewer than eight choices. For the upwardly mobile seeking a more cultured clientele, instruction in the correct form of address in correspondence was a further necessity: Daniel Mostaert's *Secretaris* was on the list for 14 stuivers. A handbook of spelling was another useful purchase, and at 3 stuivers it was an affordable insurance against humiliation for those whose education had been interrupted. On the other hand, Johan Coutereels' definitive text on bookkeeping, at 1 gulden and 16 stuivers, was probably only for those with a professional qualification in accountancy.

The business established and prospering, a man could afford the luxury and comfort of a family and children. What other books would find their way into a modest but prospering home? A medical handbook of some sort, certainly. Given that the independent trader had no insurance against incapacity, 2 gulden invested in a *Fondament der Medicijn* (*Foundations of*

Medicine) might almost have been considered a professional expense. If budgets were pinched Laurensz could also offer Jan Petters' *Chirurgien* for 6 stuivers. But the best insurance against illness and the heart-breaking tragedy of children dying young, was God's beneficent providence. There is no doubt that in a pious household the major expenditure on books would have been on the staples of religious life. These books were not necessarily cheap. Copies of the folio States Bible, the sort of family possession passed down from generation to generation, were available from Laurensz for 10 gulden: just over a week's income for a well-set-up tradesman. Of course, incomes among tradesmen were very unpredictable, and oscillated wildly, depending on when bills were paid. The purchase of the family Bible could well follow a significant windfall, or it could have been a gift from parents or a richer relative. Such a possession would be a major status symbol: somewhere to inscribe the names of the children as they were born (and died) in a growing household.

Other staples of the religious life were much cheaper. A New Testament in the new States translation could be had for 2 gulden; a book of psalms for 8 stuivers, or 4 stuivers in a small format. A copy of the Dutch confession of faith was available for 2 stuivers. Catechisms varied very considerably in price. Since this was the height of Gellius de Bouma's celebrity, it cost 11 stuivers to purchase a copy from Laurensz, but there were cheaper alternatives, and Bouma was too dense to be used to instruct young children. Almost certainly, a pious household would have had one or more books of songs. Singing was ubiquitous in Protestant society, in church, at the workplace, in the tavern and at home. There was a major market for both secular and spiritual songs: Laurensz lists twenty-one titles in his theology list, and twenty-three among the secular titles. A book of songs cost as little as 1 stuiver; the Rotterdam songbook was available in two versions, the spiritual songs for 2 stuivers and the secular songs for 3. These would be books without printed music, but the tunes were very familiar, and very much overlapping between the two versions.

With the Rotterdam songbook, we are moving towards a literature of recreation, and certainly, we are not expecting to find a great number of frivolous purchases in pious households. But if they were to be tempted, then Laurensz certainly had texts for all pockets. An old favourite of chivalric literature, *Hercules and Jason*, was available for 5 stuivers; curiosity about the world outside could be satisfied with 2 stuivers expended on the *Life of the Turks*, though many Dutch children might hanker after the more expensive contemporary excitement offered by one of the heroic Dutch voyages.

They could also own an edition of the patriotic *Geuzenliedboek* for 3 stuivers.

We have now assembled a collection of around twenty items, including those bought for strictly professional purposes. Together they would have required an outlay of 17 gulden, more than half accounted for by the folio family Bible. A *Book of Martyrs* would have cost another 5 gulden: another book to be saved for. This represents in total around two or three weeks' income for the average Dutch household, though of course in reality the expenditure would have been spread over many years. Some texts were read and discarded or exchanged with neighbours; others, particularly the staples of religious worship, used to death and replaced; which is why, of course, we find more evidence of their existence in Laurensz's catalogues than in the collections of the great libraries today.

THE BREWER'S FEAST

On 17 June 1698 the Leiden bookseller Boudewyn van der Aa offered for sale the books of the recently deceased Johannes de Planque.³ At one level, there was nothing very strange about this. By this point book auctions had become an everyday occurrence in Holland's major cities, and more infrequent events in another dozen towns scattered around the Republic. Serious collectors sometimes had to choose between attending auctions in Leiden, Amsterdam and The Hague, all taking place on the same day. What was noteworthy in this particular instance was that the collection being sold was that of a brewer. It is no offence to brewers to note that they are not normally regarded as the most bookish of the Republic's citizens. Yet De Planque had put together a very considerable collection of more than a thousand books. This was recognisably not the collection of a scholar: there were far more vernacular titles than one would anticipate in the collection of a minister or jurist. The collection was also far more orientated towards books in smaller formats, octavo and duodecimo. But this was still a splendid library. De Planque had a great interest in history and had bought most of the canonical works along with reprint editions of the great Dutch voyages. The brewer read Pierre Bayle and Plutarch as well as Van Meteren's history of the Dutch Revolt and the life of Admiral de Ruyter. He had a complete set of both the *Hollandse Mercurius* and the theological works of William Perkins in Dutch translation.⁴ For those who had made money, the opportunities to satisfy the diverse tastes of a curious mind were almost boundless.

This rich and varied collection, brought to market at the very end of the century, points to a significant evolution in the auction market. In its first

manifestation the auction market had served a relatively narrowly defined section of the buying public. If we leave aside the recycling of booksellers' stock (largely to other booksellers), the personal collections offered at auction fitted a quite specific profile. These were the collections of scholars and professors, regents and statesmen, and of the established professional classes, ministers, doctors and jurists. These groups encompassed the only book buyers likely to have amassed collections of sufficient size to justify the expense and trouble of advertising and staging an auction. Smaller collections were bought up by booksellers and then combined with others into a conglomerate sale. These sales, too, often contained some very fine items, but the nature of the sale made it impossible to connect the lots to a specific original owner. Where it was possible to stage a sale of a single collection, this was a distinct advantage in the marketplace. Jurists could attend the sale of a fellow lawyer knowing precisely what sort of books were likely to be on offer, even before they had seen the catalogue. They also knew that when the time came for the family to liquidate their working collection, they would get a good price for the same reason. In this way, valued staples of professional life were cycled back into active use. It is not impossible that in the course of the century particularly valued texts were bought and sold four or five times.

With these auction sales we are entering a different part of the market, where collecting was both a professional necessity and a marker of success. The collections sold at auction in this second tier of the market generally comprised between 400 and 1,000 books: considerably more than the number of books accumulated in an artisanal household, but not yet the grand scholarly or regent collections we will meet towards the end of this chapter. Some were assembled by men whose incomes were not much larger than our complaining Delft minister: the Reformed clergy turned out to be deft foragers for books, and probably among the most intensive users. All of these larger collections show two characteristics not evident in the smallest collections. They were far more Latinate, and they depended largely on imported books. The dependence on imports was especially marked in the collections of lawyers and doctors. In this section of the market, the Dutch book trade continued to import from the established centres of quality printing, rather than undertake local reprints. Taken together, these auction catalogues offer us an extraordinarily vivid picture of the market in learned print in an age when the print world was making an increasing share of its profits from printing for a vernacular audience. But nowhere was it easier to build a library than in the Dutch Republic, with its smoothly functioning multiple markets and well-organised import trade.

This was largely an integrated market, though booksellers in the major Dutch cities still orientated their stock towards the particular tastes of their local clientele. The booksellers of Amsterdam stocked a rather different range of books from those that would be most in demand in the university town, Leiden. The Hague, as the seat of government, had an especially active market in legal texts. This impacted also on the auction market. The widow of the Dordrecht minister Johannes Borardus received special permission in 1647 to have the auction of her husband's books in Leiden: 'because such a sale deserves to be held in a place with such a famous academy, since it is in Leiden that the most lovers of rare books reside'.⁵ In the early years there was a clear sense that better prices could be obtained in Leiden than elsewhere: when, in 1622, Janus Gruter in Heidelberg was looking to sell his library, he thought he could have more than doubled the local value by shipping it to Leiden.⁶ And in the first years the heirs of distinguished collectors did go to considerable trouble to have the auction in Leiden, something that caused disquiet among the local booksellers, who feared that this would spoil their own business. They lobbied for new rules that would prohibit non-residents from selling their books in Leiden. In the end such regulations proved unenforceable; booksellers found that rather than trying to restrict the auction market, it was far better to get involved themselves.

This newly developed market in second-hand books played a vital role in facilitating the development of major collections; it also played an increasingly important role in the economics of the book world. During the course of the century we know of at least 4,000 book auctions; collectively they traded something in the region of 4 million books. All of these sales generated profit for the auctioneer, usually a local bookseller. From two large auctions in 1609 and 1610 Louis Elzevier earned respectively 440 and 480 gulden; one of these commissions was about the average income of a Dutch household, and on top of all his other profits a huge windfall (in contrast, his position as beadle to the university brought in a miserly 72 gulden).⁷ Elzevier took a 5 per cent premium; over the course of the century the auctioneer's premium eased up to between 7 and 12 per cent (charged exclusively to the seller). And here, crucially, the auctioneer was making money from books they had not had to buy, or print, or even warehouse – in other words, without any of the additional expenses and charges that so bedevilled the economics of the print industry. There was no need to borrow to finance the auction trade – this was profit without investment, particularly as they would be paid separately if they also printed the catalogue. By the second half of the century some booksellers were holding sales on a monthly basis:

there were small fortunes to be made feeding the collecting habit. This was a trade from which everyone derived profit: the buyer, the seller and the happy intermediary.

WINDFALLS FROM THE POISONED TREE

Let us now meet some more of these collectors, who brought such joy to the book trade. Our bookish brewer was something of an anomaly, but not unique; we know of several merchants who had their books auctioned, as well as one glazier. But such collectors were not the norm: most collectors were men with some professional need for books. From catalogues or archival references we know the professions of some 1,340 men whose libraries were offered for sale between 1599 and 1700. These included 52 schoolmasters, mostly teachers of the Latin schools (often the rector). There were 215 lawyers or judges, 142 doctors and at least 10 apothecaries. Among the elite collectors were 147 professors, and 125 regents and magistrates. By far the largest group were the 447 ministers with collections large enough to justify a separate auction. Most were ministers of the Reformed Church, though it should be noted that Remonstrants, Lutherans, Mennonites and a scattering of Catholic priests could bring their collections to sale without obstruction.

All collectors operate within certain limitations, limitations defined partly by their interests or sense of propriety. There were some books a Reformed minister would not think it seemly to own (or at least to have acknowledged in the catalogue of their library). But of course the main constraints were availability and affordability. No collector, however much they spend, has all the books they want – that is part of the mad excitement of collecting. Professional men must frequently have wanted access to texts they did not possess, even if they had assembled a substantial library of their own. Some books they might be able to borrow from friends. There is evidence that within circles of friends, books were regarded in some respect as a communal resource; from the first age of print, and indeed in the manuscript age, friends traded favours in this way. But it was inevitably the case that the best opportunities of this sort were available to those with the largest collections: the courteous humanist habit of sharing texts would not necessarily help the local minister, or notary, trying to get their hands on a particular book. You could perhaps impose on a friendly bookseller, but this was a trick that could not be used too often; too much browsing with no purchase would soon sour the relationship.

For men from the professional classes, institutional collections offered a further possible source of desired books. The Dutch Republic had an unusually large number of institutional collections, the most distinguished of which were the five university libraries. By the middle of the seventeenth century every university in Europe had recognised the necessity of a functioning university library, though they were not the huge collections we are familiar with today. As we have seen, quite a number were smaller than the private collections of leading members of the teaching staff. Access was also quite restricted. Students were usually allowed access only for two hours twice a week: the university library was primarily conceived as a reference resource for the teaching staff. It is possible that a minister might be able to call in the occasional favour, particularly if they were graduates of the local university, but this could not be relied on. For this class of book-owner, municipal libraries were potentially a second source of texts and often lay closer to hand.

Municipal libraries developed remarkably early in the Dutch Republic.⁸ Like so much in this new state, they were a largely accidental creation, yet another product of the bitter religious divisions of the war of independence. As the new Protestant state took shape, Catholic institutions were summarily dissolved, their lands and buildings confiscated, their churches closed or repurposed for Protestant worship. This also applied to their libraries. In most towns the collections were gathered together in one location, usually one of the former ecclesiastical buildings. What happened then depended very much on local initiative.

Most city libraries were founded in the final decades of the sixteenth century. The more punctilious town councils made arrangements for a founding charter, as at Utrecht (1584), Haarlem (1596) and Rotterdam (1604); but in most cases the establishment and indeed purpose of the library remained rather unclear. Their origins dictated that the original collections would be largely Catholic in nature. If they were to be useful to wider groups than the small number of Protestant controversialists mining these Catholic texts for error, money had to be invested to buy new books – and in the early years of the Republic there were many calls on the city's resources. The new books that were added to the libraries scarcely changed the collections' fundamentally theological character. Their contents were also almost exclusively Latin: they were not intended as a recreational facility for local citizens. Access was, in any case, highly restricted, and normally at the discretion of the curator, often the rector of the local Latin school, a regent or minister. In Gouda citizens had to pay 12 gulden or donate books

of similar value if they wished to use the library.⁹ Any potential user had to consult the books *in situ*. These were not lending libraries; indeed, they had few of the characteristics we would associate with a public library. If the original Catholic buildings in which they were stored were required for another purpose the books would be moved out. In the case of Amsterdam they were stored in the Nieuwe Kerk, until they were transferred to form the basis of the collection of the Illustrious School.

If we ask therefore how far the existence of these municipal libraries would have served the needs of private users, then the answer seems to be very little. Many were very small: the library of Alkmaar had just over 300 titles. The titles inherited from their former Catholic owners dated almost exclusively from the sixteenth century, and the concerted buying that would have built a more useful collection was beyond the resources of most municipalities. In this respect they differed from university collections, whose regents consciously focused on buying texts that were likely to be useful to the academic community, and were possibly beyond the purchasing power of individual professors. There was a far greater synergy between the university libraries and the needs of the professoriate than between the municipal libraries and the collections of local lawyers, doctors or other professional users.

Yet the municipal libraries were still much valued civic institutions. In all, twelve of the cities of Holland established a municipal library, along with Arnhem, Nijmegen, Deventer and Zutphen in the east, and Middelburg in Zeeland.¹⁰ Towns as small as Goes and Tholen could also boast a municipal library. In the southern war zone, at Breda, Den Bosch and Maastricht, municipal libraries became a sort of missionary outpost in regions that remained resolutely Catholic. As this might suggest, the establishment of a municipal library made an important statement. Even if they were not much used, municipal libraries were still valued for the prestige they conferred on a local community: in much the same way that in the fifteenth century European towns and cities had been keen to welcome the printing press. Some towns attempted to make creative use of their new resource: in Edam the library was kept in the same space as the teaching room of the local Latin school. This was rather the exception; in Alkmaar hardly any students from the Latin school seem to have used the library. Just as had been the case with the early history of the printing press, once the first flush of enthusiasm wore off, municipal libraries were rather neglected. There was very little new spending to build municipal collections in the second half of the century.

The shining exception to this rather dismal tale is the extraordinary success of the municipal library in Utrecht. Utrecht had joined the revolt in 1580, and the municipal library was established four years later. At its foundation it contained around 500–600 volumes; there should have been many more, but the monastic collections of Utrecht were plundered and destroyed, and some of the books had already been sold. The library found a home in the Janskerk, where it attracted a great deal of local interest and civic patronage. Crucially, it was significantly enhanced by two donations: the first by Evert van der Poll, Pensionary of the States of Utrecht, who donated his library of 800–1,000 volumes at his death in 1602. The second donation, made by Huybert van Buchell, canon of Utrecht, consisted of 2,000 volumes (apparently his family was dismayed that he donated the books). These arrived in stages between 1603 and 1605. The municipal authorities decided to celebrate these extraordinary acts of munificence by commissioning a printed catalogue of the collection. Published in 1608, this revealed that the library now contained close to 6,000 titles; as this implies, in addition to the major donations, the city had made a substantial number of additional purchases between the 1580s and the early 1600s.

When the Illustrious School of Utrecht was founded in 1634 (and then two years later upgraded to a university) the library was transformed into the university library. It stayed in the Janskerk, but the rules of use became more strict. The library was only open two afternoons a week, rather than one day and two afternoons, and readers could no longer take books from the shelves themselves. Restrictions were also placed on readers: only ‘well-known scholars or qualified individuals’ were to use the library. This reorganisation was prompted by the appointment of the first librarian, Cornelis Booth (one of the aldermen of the city). Over the next decade many older titles were sold, and duplicate copies were also disposed of. The library made some purchases of newer titles, and tried unsuccessfully to oblige all Utrecht publishers to donate a copy of their publications. The librarian also bought many titles at the auction of the collection of the historian Aernout van Buchell.

A new catalogue of the library was not published until the second half of the century.¹¹ The first part, published in 1664, featured all manuscript titles and the folios, while the catalogue from 1670 included all the books in smaller formats. Comparing this new catalogue, a rather grand folio, with the earlier catalogue of 1608 reveals just how much the collection had changed over the course of sixty years. In 1670 the library contained 6,100

titles and around 500 manuscripts. Between 1608 and the 1660s at least 1,000 books were lost, stolen or sold; but these losses were compensated for by a major programme of new acquisitions. The result was a collection that differed in many ways from what one might expect of the collection of a university library. Theological texts still made up the largest single category, and the Catholic origins of the collection explain the high number of titles published in Antwerp, Louvain and Douai. Some of these Catholic texts date from the original foundation, but many were the result of conscious collecting. The Douai imprints date mostly from the first three decades of the seventeenth century, and the library also possessed a good range of the works of the influential Catholic theologian Cardinal Bellarmine. In this most resolute citadel of Calvinist orthodoxy, the fruits of the poisoned tree of Catholic theology were repurposed as weapons in the fight against false doctrine. During the course of the century, Utrecht students would be led through repeated series of dissertation exercises against Bellarmine and more recent heresies. For this purpose the library had also accessioned a remarkably full collection of the works of Fausto Sozzini, the Anti-Trinitarian whose radical views exercised Dutch ministers for much of the seventeenth century.

Theological works predominate in Utrecht, but not to the same extent as many university collections. There are large numbers of medical and judicial works, but also works of history, politics, poetry and astronomy. One would not necessarily expect to find a set of Lambert Hortensius's commentaries on Aristophanes in a university library, and certainly not a set of *Amadis de Gaule*, a sweeping chivalric saga much disapproved of among the austere. There are more books in smaller formats than academic folios, and a surprising number of vernacular titles. Given that Franeker, another austere orthodox institution, actually sold off all its books in small formats to buy more folios, this gives the Utrecht collection a very distinctive character.

The origins of the Utrecht University collection are unusual; but rather than conform and adapt, the local curators had embraced this diversity, and built on it in an unusually creative way. The destruction of the Catholic religious houses had brought into public ownership some fabulous books, but in many cities these windfalls from the poisoned tree had been treated with caution and suspicion – these were not, by and large, books that could be trusted in the hands of the new citizenry. Utrecht was unusually imaginative in the way that it embraced the hybrid quality of the collection's origins; and in the process built a local resource of great distinctiveness.

THE PROFESSOR AND THE STATESMAN

We have reserved for this last section the largest personal collections, collections of many thousands of works, sometimes larger than the local institutional libraries. Libraries of this size were really only possible for two classes of collectors: major scholars (often university professors) and members of the regent class, for whom a library constituted one aspect of a general pattern of conspicuous consumption. These were collections which commanded thousands of gulden at auction: that of Daniel Heinsius, sold in 1656, raised around 15,000 gulden. In 1682 the library of his son Nicolaas went for 24,708 gulden, the equivalent of sixty years' earnings for an average household.

Of all the collectors, professors had the best opportunities to build their collections in a frugal and cost-efficient way. For them, the art of collecting consisted partly of dignified waiting for books to arrive. Professors and other scholars with an international reputation were of all the collectors the most likely to receive significant enhancements to their collections through gifts: from pupils, from admirers, indeed from any who wished to be in their good graces. For many aspiring writers or theologians it was worth the price of one of your precious presentation copies, just to receive a gracious manuscript note of thanks. Just as had been the case with Erasmus or Luther, merely to be on corresponding terms with a man like Daniel Heinsius meant a great deal in scholarly circles. The major scholarly collectors were also the group of book owners most likely to add value to their texts through use of them. The handwritten annotations of an intellectual heavyweight like Scaliger were as precious as an ancient manuscript. Books previously owned and worked on by the major scholars passed down through the libraries of friends and colleagues and sometimes into the auction market. In such cases, the lots were invariably accompanied by a neat italic annotation to this effect: '*locis manu Heinsii emendatus*'.¹² The price premium could be substantial.

Gifts of this sort were generally welcome, but the Dutch professors also commanded substantial resources of their own. Although none seem to have inherited or passed on a large fortune, many enjoyed a comfortable income. For the most celebrated, who might often have been lured from other institutions by the promise of a substantial salary, an annual stipend of 2,000 gulden was not unusual, and this could be generously enhanced by a variety of ad hoc fees and earning opportunities.¹³ A professor was a figure of stature in the local community, so outgoings might be commensurately high, but this still left considerable freedom for building a book collection. Scholars were also

well connected in the book world. Ever since the fourteenth century, the Republic of Letters had functioned very effectively as an international network for sourcing texts.¹⁴ Correspondence networks could be put to good use to find desired texts, or to oblige an open-handed patron or friend in the publishing world. The professoriate generally accumulated not only large collections, but some very special books.

We can get a sense of the marketability of the major professional collections from the complex history of the sale of the library of Gisbertus Voetius, professor of theology at Utrecht. Voetius, as we have seen, was well rewarded for his resolute defence of Calvinist orthodoxy. His ample salary was generously augmented by other income streams, not least the substantial sums paid by the parents of students for the privilege of boarding at the house of the great man. Not surprisingly, Voetius was able to assemble a stunning library of more than 5,000 titles, and this was gradually disposed of in the three years following his death in 1676. A first auction took place at the family home in November 1677; what remained of the collection went under the hammer in June 1679.¹⁵

Yet between these two Utrecht auctions, on 25 November 1678, there took place in London an auction advertised boldly on the catalogue title-page as a sale of books from the library of Voetius.¹⁶ As so often in the book world, all was not what it seemed. This London sale consisted of over 8,000 lots, and the first Utrecht sale had disposed of only the first 1,400 of Voetius's books. In his slightly shifty note to the reader, the London auctioneer Moses Pitt drew back somewhat from the bold claims of the title-page:

After several experiments of late of the sale of books by auction . . . I have resolved to gratify the learned by exposing to sale the library of a worthy and learned person deceased, with a considerable number of other choice books of most sciences, some of which have been bought out of the best libraries abroad (particularly of our the late famous and learned Gisbert Voetius's) and out of the most eminent seats of learning beyond the seas have been imported; which I hope will be invitation enough to the curious to embrace this occasion of buying what has not hitherto, and perhaps not again be exposed in this way to sale.¹⁷

This was deftly done, but one does wonder quite how many of the London bidders would have been requited in their hope of acquiring a work from the library of the great Dutch theologian. Of the theological folios, the edition of Isidorus Pelusiotae (Commelijn, 1605) offered in London seems

to match the edition sold in Utrecht the previous year, but the editions of Augustine, Basil and Chrysostom do not.¹⁸ The edition of Johannes Crellius's response to Grotius on Socinianism may also have been from Utrecht, and Moses Pitt might have acquired an autograph copy of one of Voetius's own works.¹⁹ These were slender pickings.

What seems to have happened is that the London auctioneer had his agents pick up some items in Utrecht to act as a headliner for his disposal of what was in truth high-quality stock. It just did not come from Voetius's library. The stern Calvinist pastor would not, in life, have approved such sleight of hand; but he might have felt a small swell of pride that his name had such magnetic appeal among London bibliophiles. Certainly, his family were the beneficiaries. The sale of his library, totalling 5,535 books, netted them at least 6,000 gulden.

Professorial collections are marked most of all by their seriousness of purpose; if their owners had a secret passion for *Amadis de Gaule*, books of this sort were probably removed before the collection was brought to the market. Members of the regent class suffered from no such restraints. They could collect with an unbridled abundance, mixing the best and most distinguished editions with as much literature, poetry and history as they might wish to while away their hours of freedom from public affairs.

It is as well to be reminded just how enormous were the fortunes that could be deployed to ransack the stock of Europe's finest centres of book production. Imaginative historians have recently recreated a version of the Dutch Republic's rich list, identifying 250 individuals with a net worth of more than 200,000 gulden.²⁰ Of these 250, two-thirds lived in either Amsterdam or The Hague. Interestingly, they included two members of the publishing industry, Joan Blaeu and Hillebrant II van Wouw, the former printer to the States General. Rather like the modern rich list, Joan Blaeu's net worth was a matter of dispute, but the 355,000 gulden predicated would not have won him a place in the top hundred. Hillebrant II van Wouw came in at number 177, with a net worth of 226,500 gulden.

Of course, there were many ways to spend this capital: houses, clothes, silverware, paintings, tapestries and a house full of liveried servants were all expensive. But even with all these other calls on a large income, there was still a great deal available for buying books. We can see what the greatest fortunes could buy by examining the catalogue published for the sale of the library of Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel in 1689.

Gaspar Fagel is the great unknown statesman of the Dutch Republic. His role in shaping the Dutch state was in its way every bit as crucial as that of

Oldenbarnevelt and De Witt, without garnering a tenth of the celebrity. There is no statue of Fagel in the Binnenhof, or indeed in any public place in the Netherlands. That is largely because he changed sides. Born into a patrician family, Fagel rose smoothly to the zenith of regent power as a loyal lieutenant of Johan de Witt; in 1667 he would be one of the chief proponents of the Perpetual Edict excluding the future William III of Orange from power. But in 1672 he sniffed the wind and chose not to go down with the ship. Abandoning De Witt to his fate, he would inherit his office as Grand Pensionary, a position he maintained, as a faithful ally of William III, until his death shortly after the invasion of England in 1688.

In his own way, Fagel was loyal to both sides of the great divide in Dutch political life, and the rewards were immense. Already a rich man when appointed Pensionary of Haarlem in 1663, he became fabulously so in the last years of his life; and among the perquisites of this lifestyle was a spectacular library. This collection was large, but not extraordinarily so; the catalogue of the sale of 1689 lists only 3,200 titles.²¹ However, the books commanded astonishing sums, altogether well over 10,000 gulden. This was a collection like no other in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.

At its core was a collection of 1,600 works of jurisprudence, 800 of them in folio. These books included all the major canonical works of legal history and practice, often in complete multi-volume sets. Most were recent editions. As seems always to have been the case in the salerooms of the Dutch Republic, there was no price premium for antiquity. The books were gathered from all the major centres of legal printing in Europe: Geneva, Frankfurt and Paris, Lyon and Venice. The *Decisiones Rotae Romanae*, in the ten-volume set of 1645, raised 62 gulden; the works of Jacques Cujas published in ten volumes in Paris in 1658 were knocked down for 71 gulden. The unexpected high point of the sale was the *Oceanus Juris*, complete in twenty-seven volumes (Venice, 1584), which raised an eye-watering 400 gulden.²²

These were not the sort of books that a bookseller in The Hague or Amsterdam would normally keep in stock; most likely they would have been sourced for Fagel by an agent working with booksellers in the various book capitals of Europe. They would probably never have been available before in the same saleroom. Even so, the prices paid for Fagel's books were significantly above the market norm. A *Placcaetboek*, the compendium of Dutch ordinances and laws, was a fairly common feature in a lawyer's library. Yet Fagel's three-volume set sold for 57 gulden.²³ No doubt all of Fagel's books were exquisitely bound, but here purchasers were bidding for a book of historic importance, the laws of the Republic commented on and annotated

by the man who had run the country for twenty-six of the most turbulent years of its young life. This was a piece of history in its own right, and a window into the soul of one of Holland's most darkly unknowable rulers.

Fagel was an exceptional case, and we might wonder to what extent he was personally involved in acquiring these magnificent books. Running the Dutch Republic through war and peace does not leave a great deal of time for poring over book catalogues. A more typical example of a discerning collector with deep pockets was Johannes Thysius, inheritor of one of the most distinguished names in seventeenth-century scholarship: his great-uncle Antonius was professor of theology at the University of Leiden. Between 1635, when he was only 13 years old, and his relatively early death in 1653, Thysius created a library of some 2,500 titles, almost the same size as the local university collection. In his will Thysius bequeathed 20,000 gulden to preserve his collection as a library for public use. The library can still be viewed today in its magnificent original seventeenth-century building on the Rapenburg in Leiden.

Thysius was a precocious and dogged collector.²⁴ In 1635, at the age of 13, he bought 281 titles from the collection of Jacobus Thysius, another great-uncle and brother of Antonius. Thanks to an inheritance, he could already



54 The library of Johannes Thysius, one of the many great private libraries assembled in the Dutch Republic, but one of the few to survive intact, here in a building created to hold his gift of the collection as a public institution.

afford the outlay of 727 gulden at this sale; it bought him a foundational collection many scholars in their thirties and forties would have envied, consisting of many large folios and reference texts. Johannes was a young man already heading for a life of ease. In 1648, aged 26, he was worth 84,000 gulden, much of it bestowed on him by his mother and grandmother; he was able to live off the rents of the properties he owned, and concentrate his attentions on his library. Thysius obtained many of his most valued purchases from auctions. Between 21 March and 13 June 1650 Thysius visited six, buying 250 volumes, comprising 337 titles. He attended auctions not only in Leiden, but also in Amsterdam, The Hague and once in Rotterdam.²⁵ Books worth 158 gulden and 3 stuivers were purchased from the collection of the distinguished scholar Johannes L'Empereur. The auctioneer of this valuable collection was the wealthy bookseller Isaac Commelijn, who received 62 gulden as his commission. Since this commission was calculated at the rate of 6.25 per cent of all sales, we know that L'Empereur's collection brought his heirs just under 1,000 gulden: Thysius' purchases accounted for some 15 per cent of this total. Commelijn was also paid 11 gulden, 17 stuivers and 8 penningen for the printing of the catalogue. We do not know how many books were involved, since the catalogue is now lost: indeed, the detailed notes that Thysius kept on his collecting provide the only record we have of seven auctions held in this period, including that of L'Empereur. This hints at an even higher level of auction activity than the 4,000 auctions we can presently document for the seventeenth century.

All in all, Thysius records buying books at twenty-six auctions, all focused on the more scholarly end of the market. Only 4.4 per cent of Thysius' books were in Dutch and 14.6 per cent in French; the rest were mostly Latin texts.²⁶ Thysius might have drawn his income from commerce, but he had definitely inherited his great-uncle's scholarly interests. Less than 20 per cent of the books he owned were published in the Dutch Republic: almost half came originally from Germany and France. The collectors on whose libraries Thysius could now feast had assembled their books from Europe's major book markets. All this, and much more, was now available for the discerning collector on his own doorstep.

What we learn from Thysius' book-buying itinerary is that for a collector of energy and taste (and deep pockets) it was possible to put together a collection of almost limitless size extremely quickly. This was a new development in the international book world. One hundred years before, the only way to create a major collection from a standing start was either to buy a distinguished library in its entirety or to organise a bulk purchase from a major

publisher like Christophe Plantin in Antwerp. One of the reasons Plantin maintained such an extensive back list was to satisfy requests of this sort.

Otherwise, building a library in the first age of print was a serious life's work, as indeed it still was for our discerning professional collectors. Yet even for those for whom buying books was still a considered expense, diligence and long life could reap significant rewards. A lawyer or doctor buying thirty books a year over a career of forty years would leave a very respectable collection of over 1,000 books: for many successful professional men this was very manageable. Even the frugal schoolmaster David Beck, who liked to end every year with cash in hand, bought ten books in 1624, a year in which he recorded having read or consulted sixty texts.²⁷ But this was very different from life at the top of the market. In the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, virtually everything was available for someone with the connections and the cash: the world brought its books to Amsterdam, Leiden and The Hague. The ultimate expression of this unprecedented opportunity was the library of Cornelis Nicolai, the precocious son of a burgomaster of Amsterdam. When he died in 1697, his distraught relatives returned to the market a collection of some 4,000 books. Nicolai was 24 years old. Perhaps we should sympathise a little with our grumpy Delft minister, forced to be no more than a spectator as the rich feasted on this extraordinary cornucopia of knowledge. But then again, perhaps he and his wife should have gone a bit easier on the butter.

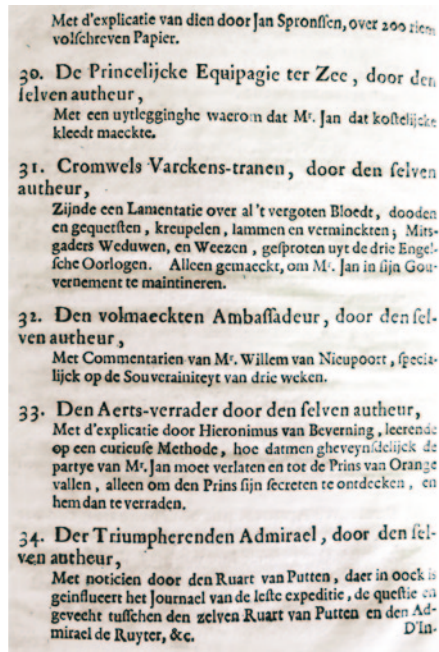
THE LIBRARY OF JOHAN DE WITT

For those seeking to build a library, the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic had become a collector's paradise. There were numerous bookshops, regular auction sales and easy access to books printed abroad, all supported by a sophisticated infrastructure of print, stock catalogues, auction catalogues and, as reference tools, the catalogues of institutional libraries. Yet of the 4,000 catalogues we know to have been published in this period, none was quite like the *Catalogus van Boecken inde Bybliothèque van Mr. Jan de Wit* (*Catalogue of Books in the Library of Johan de Witt*), published in 1672.²⁸ De Witt led the Republic as Grand Pensionary of Holland for twenty years, between 1653 and 1672; he was also a cultivated and thoughtful man, who might in other circumstances have been an eminent mathematician. He must, like his successor Gaspar Fagel, have gathered a distinguished collection: who, among those who valued the 'True Freedom' of Republican rule, would not have wished to take a peep inside his library? If that is what they

expected, readers of the *Catalogus* would have been disappointed, for what we have here is a satire, a cruel joke. By the time of its publication De Witt was dead: stabbed, shot and then torn to pieces by an Orangist mob. His carcass was exhibited in the most prominent public space of the seat of government in The Hague.

This extraordinary act made the judicial murder of Oldenbarnevelt in 1619 seem almost decorous; one might have expected, from the Dutch, at least a period of sober reflection. Instead, the satirical *Catalogus* danced on the dead man's grave. Each fictional title in his purported library was a savage stab at his already desecrated corpse, recalling the accusations made against him, of corruption, collusion with the Republic's enemies, betrayal of the state which he ruled in the interests of his own narrow clique. The catalogue opened with a title purportedly written by Jan's father, Jacob de Witt:

Genealogy of Methuselah the old Nero, or arch-traitor of Loevestein, by Mr Jacob de Witt, treasurer of Holland, together with his genealogy, coat of arms, and device, which portrays the heroic forefathers of that scum.



55 A page from the *Catalogue of Books in the Library of Johan de Witt*, a savage and pitiless satire, which nevertheless demonstrates the extent to which book collecting had become ubiquitous among Holland's elite.

This hit at the old man, grieving over the death of his two sons, was particularly vicious. Most of the titles turned their irony squarely on the former Pensionary. According to this list, somewhere in his busy life De Witt had found time to write 'The smirk of the devil in the morning dew' and a more contemplative work, 'The foundations of governance, in which is clearly portrayed the means used to revenge Oldenbarnevelt's death, to murder Contra-Remonstrants, and to become French rather than Orangist'. The support for the French was something of a theme, as revealed by 'Monsieur Colbert's happy entry into The Hague, composed of a journal of all the discussions held between Colbert and Mr Jan on the same subject'. But at what cost is revealed by number thirty-one in the catalogue, 'Cromwell's pig-tears, a lamentation of all the spilt blood, the dead, wounded, crippled, paralysed, and mutilated; as well as all the widows and orphans, made by the three English wars. All waged to maintain Mr Jan's government'. The reader would by this time have got the gist, all summed up in the title of lot number sixty-nine, 'Profit without conscience, by Mr Jan, with a rebuttal to those who argue on the contrary'.

The *Catalogus* from 1672 was not just a grotesque and bitter work penned by a fanatical Orangist or a grudge-bearing personal enemy. It was wildly popular, a true bestseller: according to what we know from surviving copies, it went through at least eight editions in the space of a single year: there were also spin-offs, a 'continuation' and an 'appendix'. It no doubt found its way into many elegant bourgeois drawing rooms whose owners had flourished in the True Freedom, but now calmly accommodated themselves to the new realities of power. The pamphlet tells us much about this pious, decorous but steel-edged society; it also tells us much about the book industry, that its stock-in-trade, the printed catalogue, could itself have become a vehicle for satire. The book industry had built an extraordinary place in Dutch life, with an infrastructure of remarkable power and resilience. This resilience would be severely tested as the Republican True Freedom collapsed, and its enemies gathered to divide the spoils.

PART IV

CATASTROPHE AND
REDEMPTION

CHAPTER THIRTEEN



Boundaries

IN THE SUMMER OF 1672, the wife of Cornelis de Witt, Maria van Berckel, was sitting in a barge on the way to Dordrecht. This was the day after her husband had been murdered, and Maria was fleeing The Hague and the fury of the mob, travelling incognito. Hiding in a corner of the barge, she overheard an animated conversation between her fellow passengers. One of them reached into his coat, and showed his companions one of the fingers of her husband, cut off after his murder.¹

This encounter encapsulated the madness into which the Dutch Republic had descended. Half of the country was occupied by the invading forces of France and the Prince-Bishoprics of Cologne and Münster. The troops of Münster laid siege to Groningen while the French had reached the gates of Holland. The Prince of Orange was back, True Freedom was dead, and so was its architect, Johan de Witt, lynched with his brother by a mob in the centre of The Hague. The artist Romeyn de Hooghe, a supporter of the prince, was on hand to immortalise the scene: the two brothers De Witt, suspended upside down, naked, disembowelled and mutilated, left to hang like slaughtered livestock; indeed, this macabre image has an uncanny resemblance to a picture by Rembrandt of a slaughtered side of beef.²

In the words of one pamphleteer, 'No one can deny that we are living in the most distressing times which have ever passed.'³ The world was turned upside down. Roads were clogged with carts filled with the material possessions of the rich; where they were heading was unclear: away from the front-line, but where would that frontline be? The art market collapsed; book auctions ceased; fishermen were stuck in port. Trade ground to a halt, with one notable exception: printers seem to have done rather well. The summer of 1672 witnessed the greatest eruption of political pamphleteering in the Dutch Golden Age.⁴ Printed petitions, songs, poems, libels and opinion pieces flooded the cities of Holland: we know of over 1,600 different pamphlets published in this single year, and more turn up fairly regularly even today. The total circulation easily exceeded 1 million copies, at least

one for every adult member of the population of the Republic. The overwhelming majority of these works heaped abuse on the regents of the True Freedom and Johan de Witt; a few desperate voices came to their support, but the most vitriolic, mean and fantastical pamphlets found the widest audience. They made sure that public anger was focused on the brothers De Witt, sealing their fate at the hands of the people of The Hague.

Some sort of control had to be restored; and it would be, by the new Stadhouder and saviour of the country, William III. But the pamphleteering of 1672 was only an extreme variety of behaviour that foreign observers regarded as characteristically Dutch. Visitors were always amazed at what they saw as the unbridled licence of the Dutch Republic, and the Dutch eagerness to express their views in print. The British naturalist John Ray, after visiting the Netherlands in 1663, commented that 'The people say and print what they please, and call it liberty.'⁵

These and later visitors also commented on the extraordinary Dutch tolerance of religious diversity. The English physician Ellis Veryard commented upon visiting Amsterdam 'that it is very ordinary to find the man of the house of one opinion, his wife of another, his children of a third and his servant of one different from them all; and yet they live without the least jangling of dissension'.⁶ Not that this was particularly admired. For the adherents of all of the mainstream churches, to tolerate diversity was not a kindness but a neglect of Christian duty, for only in the true church lay the path to salvation. Those who espoused toleration in the Reformation centuries were a motley crew of oddballs and eccentrics, who attracted far less esteem in their own age than they have from posterity. Nowhere was this more true than for the patron saint of Dutch toleration, Dirck Volckertsz Coornhert. Coornhert was an embittered contrarian who, over two decades of cantankerous disputation, did everything in his power to induce the Reformed synods to bestow on him the martyrdom his vanity demanded.⁷ Very much to their credit, and with enormous forbearance, the synods patiently waited him out until, finally, Coornhert died in his own bed.

Toleration flourished in societies where the imposition of uniformity was no longer possible; and this, to a large measure, was the case in the Dutch Republic. This was an immigrant society, refreshed with repeated waves of incomers from the Southern Netherlands, France and Germany. Many adhered happily to the Reformed faith, and many others could find a home among the established Catholic, Mennonite and Lutheran communities, for the northern provinces had never achieved an absolute equivalence between the rebel cause and Calvinist religion. Toleration in the Dutch

Republic was a grudging recognition that the establishment of a single faith lay beyond the realms of the possible; and certainly, in a country born of persecution, there was little appetite for inquisition. Because the Dutch Republic lived for trade, it became a polyglot nation: uniformity of faith took second place to the needs of commerce.

These compromises were not willingly accepted by all its pious citizens. Dislike of heterodoxy found its echo in the print industry, in the thunderous sermons of Calvinist ministers, and the anxious desire to build the ramparts of the Reformed citadel in every household; here, as we have seen, print played a crucial role. Those who wished to signal their distance from these sentiments purchased the works of Coornhert, or indeed of Hugo Grotius; and the print industry found that diversity made money, catering to both the literature of contestation and the needs of the embedded minorities. In due course, Coornhert, a bestselling author in the early decades of the Republic, fell out of favour. Instead the print industry accommodated different communities by producing large quantities of their preferred devotional works. The state, despite the protestations of the Reformed Church, largely left such activities undisturbed, taking action only against the most radical philosophies.

Why was the Dutch print industry so willing to serve the needs of religious minorities? In other areas, such as the publication of newspapers, publishers were in general careful not to antagonise the local magistrates. Some printers did indeed offer their help in suppressing non-conformity. Jacob van Biesen, a printer in Arnhem, drafted a petition in which he proposed that the authorities distribute their jobbing print among a greater variety of printers, rather than a single official printer. This, Van Biesen argued, would make printers less inclined to produce licentious works.⁸ But as we shall see, there were plenty of publishers who were happy to print both government placards and the tracts of seditious sects. Some publishers acted out of conviction, either as supporters of orthodoxy or as members of grudgingly tolerated churches. But as always money played its part. Unorthodoxy was not only ineradicable in the Dutch Republic, it was also good business.

LIBRI PROHIBITI

By the 1650s, Gellius de Bouma's catechism was beginning to lose its popularity with new generations of buyers. There were always new catechisms on the market: this was one of the leading characteristics of ministerial writing

in almost any Protestant culture. But Bouma was now being squeezed out by a particularly popular competitor, the catechism of Petrus de Witte.

Bouma's catechism was an instrument of healing in difficult times. After the bruising conflicts of the Remonstrant controversy, a catechism that stressed the solid bonds of family and pastoral care appealed to Protestant households unsettled by the passions and forced resignations of the last decade of turmoil. Petrus de Witte was a man of a different stamp, a hard, unrelenting Calvinist whose road to redemption was uncompromising. In the preface to his catechism De Witte included a stern admonition to those among his flock who paid little attention to their faith or the sermons of their preacher:

You may complain about the little knowledge you have [of religion] and your ignorance, but we may complain about the sluggishness and neglect of many, who know of no pious exercises, [and] in whose houses there stirs nothing resembling any Christianity . . . From whence comes this contempt of religion? From whence comes this libertine consciousness? From whence comes this carelessness with matters of religion? O time! O morals! What do these parents do, apart from raise their children to become prey for the seductive ways of Papists, Anabaptists, Arminians, libertines . . . yes, even to become prey of the devil, to the heirs of damnation and kindling for hell?⁹

In the era of True Freedom, this struck a chord with De Witte's readers. His catechism was first published in 1652, and went through at least thirty-one editions by De Witte's death in 1670. Clearly, things had been allowed to become too lax. One may presume that few of De Witte's readers identified with the careless parents who let their children be exposed to heretical beliefs, but they would certainly have known such parents as neighbours in their community. As Johan de Witt's True Freedom re-shaped allegiances and social norms, Petrus de Witte issued his clarion call to vigilance in the defence of orthodoxy. Tolerance and forbearance could only go so far. Boundaries needed to be set, and the frontiers of Calvinist belief defended.

Alongside his catechism, Petrus de Witte was known for his *Wederlegginge der Sociniaensche Dwaelingen* (*Refutation of the Socinian Aberration*), a tract issued against the most subversive of all Christian denominations: the Socinians, or Polish Brethren.¹⁰ The Socinians, named after their Italian founder, Fausto Sozzini, were an Anti-Trinitarian Reformed sect, denying the existence of the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the

workings of original sin. The Socinians established themselves in the tolerant climate of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth towards the end of the sixteenth century. From their academy in Raków, the Socinians disseminated their teachings in print and found a following across Europe. When the Brethren were expelled from Poland in 1638, many of them fled to the Dutch Republic.

To De Witte, the Socinians were another enemy of the faith to be attacked and denounced. During his time as pastor, De Witte acquired many Socinian books to expose their erroneous ways. When his library was auctioned in 1670 the printed catalogue included at the end a selection of 103 books by unorthodox authors against whom De Witte had railed vehemently in his sermons.¹¹ These were predominantly Socinian works, but they also included a number of Remonstrant books, and the works of radical thinkers like Adriaan Koerbagh and Pieter de la Court.

It is not so remarkable that De Witte possessed these books. What is notable is that they were presented for sale in this manner, earmarked for those with an interest in subversive literature. This was a new trend, which was adopted enthusiastically by many booksellers during the next forty years. Between 1670 and 1710 another hundred libraries would be auctioned in the Dutch Republic with separate sections of banned or dangerous books, headed 'Libri Prohibiti'. Some owners were men like Petrus de Witte, who engaged with forbidden books to refute their content. But many forbidden books were also found in the collections of historians, statesmen, doctors, noblemen and lawyers. These sections, usually comprising between twenty and forty titles, were always found at the end of a catalogue; a few, like De Witte's, were unmarked, but clearly separated out; others contained the header 'Libri Sociniani'. Yet by far the most ubiquitous title of these sections was 'Libri Prohibiti'. This was occasionally accompanied by the phrase 'to be sold in private, in a closed room, at the end of the auction'.

Not all banned books were sold in this manner. There are many auction catalogues in which we find Socinian books, or the banned works of authors like Thomas Hobbes, Baruch de Spinoza and Pieter de la Court, listed among uncontentious authors. Here these controversial authors might escape attention; but gathered together under a prominent title, emphasising the allure of what was forbidden, the sections of *libri prohibiti* were anything but innocuous. The notice that such books were sold in a closed room was a teasing subversion of the law: the sale of such books was banned, whether they were auctioned in private or not. Yet booksellers like Johannes du Vivié, who auctioned many libraries containing *libri prohibiti*, hoped that



56 In this catalogue, the potential purchaser is ostensibly warned (but really encouraged) to delve into texts that, even in Holland, had attracted official censure. These *libri prohibiti* were in the collection of Constantijn Huygens Jr, secretary to William III. Judging by the annotated prices in the margins, the titles sold well.

marking the books in this fashion might attract attention, and even raise prices. Where Petrus de Witte saw heresy, booksellers saw profit.

DANGEROUS THINKERS

The unrestricted publicity afforded to *libri prohibiti* in the Dutch Republic signals one of the great paradoxes of publishing and bookselling in the Golden Age. As in all seventeenth-century states, strict laws were issued by Dutch authorities to curb the publication or sale of dangerous and non-conformist books. Some of the first edicts issued by the States of Holland and Zeeland concerned the publication and dissemination of harmful books, poems, songs and libels. Reiterated and expanded throughout the seventeenth century, these edicts threatened heavy fines or imprisonment for those who transgressed. The affairs of state, or the dogmas of the church, were not to be questioned, commented upon, or insulted in print. Sometimes specific pamphlets, newspapers or books were singled out by the regents for their offensive nature, especially when a foreign ambassador communicated

that their ruler had been insulted by a Dutch publication. Books could be confiscated; print shops could be raided, and its pressmen and compositors arrested and charged with sedition. In theory, censorship in the Dutch Republic was not much more lenient than that in other countries. In practice, however, things could not be more different.¹²

The decentralised political structure of the Republic militated against effective censorship. A book might be banned in Utrecht, but not in the rest of the country; a printer could be banished from one province, and re-establish himself in the next. Books moved efficiently from city to city through the sophisticated network of canals and barge routes. The absence of preventive censorship, which required publishers in other countries to present a copy of their work to a local censor for approval, allowed printers to take greater risks. And even if a book was prohibited, printers could use false imprints, hiding their workmanship by using real or imagined places of publication to throw the authorities off their trail. This was a favoured practice of Dutch publishers, used for a great variety of controversial works. In 1725 the Dutch news editor Laurens Arminius reported the publication in France of a prohibition of books published with fictitious imprints. That, as Arminius knew well, would be a dead letter in Holland: 'Ha! If one were to publish such an ordinance here, the entire Kalverstraat [an Amsterdam street, at that time the location of many print and bookshops] would erupt in laughter.'¹³

And laugh they did, because prohibition often increased the interest of the buying public. Lieuwe van Aitzema's *Herstelde Leeuw* (*The Lion Restored*), an account of the conflict between Amsterdam and William II of Orange in 1650, was banned by the Court of Holland in 1652 – but, as Van Aitzema later wrote, this only made it more popular, and neither he nor its printers were ever bothered by the authorities.¹⁴ Reading through auction catalogues, we can see that this was indeed one of the most popular history books published in the seventeenth century. Many books were prohibited only to placate foreign ambassadors or a persistent synod, and the authorities expended little effort to track down the offending texts. In many cases regents were reluctant to issue such placards in the first place, because, as Grand Pensionary Jacob Cats wrote, 'unvirtuous books are sought after all the more, and what is forbidden is bought with the greatest desire.'¹⁵ The marketing of *libri prohibiti* in auction catalogues only emerged two decades after Cats' death, but it was a phenomenon that embodied Dutch attitudes to print throughout the Golden Age.

During the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic became a haven for people who could not voice their opinion or practise their religion at home.

English and Scots, French, German and Polish dissidents, religious and political, arrived in waves and trickles. Some made their permanent home in the Republic, while others left for the greener pastures of the New World, or returned home after the storm had subsided.

The debate unleashed by the publication of René Descartes' *Discours de la méthode* in Leiden in 1637 would inspire more radical, home-grown free-thinkers in the 1650s and 1660s, and the appearance of many philosophical works critical of the traditional position of the church.¹⁶ Baruch de Spinoza's first published work, issued in 1663, concerned the principles of Cartesian philosophy. Spinoza mingled in a circle of Cartesians, Remonstrants, Socinians and Collegiants who enjoyed relative safety thanks to the Cartesian sympathies of the True Freedom regime, which was, on the whole, reluctant to enforce its own repressive placards.

All of these exiles and eccentrics found in the Dutch Republic, especially in Amsterdam, a book world congenial to their sceptical temperaments. The most prominent booksellers of the country stocked books for all tastes and denominations. Here one could not only procure unorthodox books, but also find a suitable publishing house. Some Amsterdam print shops made quite a specialty of this sort of work. Printers and booksellers like Hendrick Beets and Hans Fabel, immigrants themselves, were responsible for dozens of German and Dutch editions of heterodox German authors, especially the mystic philosopher Jacob Böhme.¹⁷ The apocalyptic mystic Antoinette Bourignon from Lille, connected to the French Labadist movement, found a home in Amsterdam in 1667, where many of her publications were produced by the Mennonite publishers Pieter Arentsz and Jan Rieuwertsz. Her works were published in Dutch, French and German; some were destined for local admirers, but many were ready to be sold to followers inhabiting less sympathetic regimes.

The Dutch book trade welcomed unorthodoxy, marketed it in print and exported it to wherever it was most in demand. Nothing better epitomised this openness to outsized talent than the career of Jan Amos Comenius. A theologian and schoolmaster in Bohemia, Comenius was a bishop of a small, persecuted sect, the Moravian Brethren, a Protestant Church with roots going back to the mediaeval reformer Jan Hus. He fled to Amsterdam in 1656 after his house was burnt down by Catholic partisans. In Amsterdam Comenius was received warmly by the wealthy De Geer family, who gave him access to their library, and financed the publication of his *Opera Didactica Omnia* in 1657. Comenius was later able to set up a Czech printing press in Amsterdam. His famous lexicon, the *Janua Linguarum Reserata*

(*The Door of Languages Unlocked*), became so popular that it was printed almost on an annual basis in Amsterdam and Leiden. We can see from seventeenth-century auction catalogues that Comenius was one of the most popular contemporary authors, widely respected and widely collected.

The Reformed Church looked on all of this with a jaundiced eye. In many cases, the ministers could only wait and pray for these German, English and French heretics to pack up and move on. The greatest ire of the church was reserved for the Socinians, the primary target of Petrus de Witte's tirades. In this they were reinforced by the academic institutions of the state: Johannes Hoornbeeck and Samuel Maresius, professors of theology at Leiden and Groningen, both held lengthy series of anti-Socinian disputations in the 1650s and 1660s. The titles of such series – *Hydra Socinianismi Expugnata* – did not leave much to the imagination. The Socinians were particularly disliked not only for their theological radicalism but for the sympathy they inspired in other non-conformist Protestant denominations, especially Mennonites and Remonstrants. The leaders of the church warned repeatedly that the toleration of unconventional Protestant sects would ultimately lead to a grand alliance of theological subversion, which could only return the Dutch to the fold of Rome.

During the early seventeenth century, most Socinian works were printed in Raków in Poland, and were shipped to the Netherlands via Danzig and Hamburg. When, in 1598, two Socinians arrived in Amsterdam with a shipment of Bible commentaries, they were quickly arrested and their books ordered to be burnt; but before the sentence could be executed the books were grabbed by bystanders and recycled into the market through a network of sympathetic theologians.¹⁸ During the first half of the seventeenth century Remonstrants and Mennonites played a significant role in the dissemination and sale of Socinian works from Poland to the Dutch Republic. These included the Mennonite publishers Jacob Colom and Pieter Arentsz in Amsterdam; the Naeranus family of ministers and publishers in Rotterdam; professors at the Amsterdam Remonstrant seminary, like Etienne de Courcelles; and poets and writers, such as Joachim Oudaen, Daniel de Breen and Gerard Brandt.¹⁹

When the Socinians were expelled from Raków in 1638, many flocked to the Netherlands, where they received generous support from these established networks. Soon the Dutch Republic became the new home of Socinian literature. The Blaeu family, staunchly Remonstrant themselves, were happy to provide a publishing house for the texts of the exiled Polish Brethren. The local classis, however, was on their trail, and they repeatedly exerted

pressure on the Amsterdam magistrates to prosecute the Blaeus. This succeeded only once, in 1642, when the sheriff of the city arrived at Joan Blaeu's shop and confiscated the entire print run of the *De vera religione* by Johannes Völkel, a summary of Socinian ideas. The aldermen of Amsterdam pronounced that the heretical books were to be burnt, and that the publisher was to be fined 2,000 gulden. Blaeu appealed to the burgomasters of the city, who quashed the verdict, but not before the books had gone up in flames. When the same work was issued a few years later in a Dutch translation, it included the boastful statement on the title-page that the book had been 'condemned in Holland by the aldermen, publicly executed and burnt by fire, anno 1642, in January'.²⁰ Censorship, as Cats and Van Aitzema had recognised earlier, was excellent publicity.

Under pressure from the church, Grand Pensionary Johan de Witt and his colleagues passed a number of regulations against the Socinians. In the 1650s, successive edicts published by Zeeland, Holland, Utrecht and the States General banned Socinian practice and the production, importation or sale of Socinian books. These regulations, although strict in tone, were hardly followed up by the regents. The ministers of the Reformed Church rightly suspected De Witt and his closest allies of the True Freedom of libertine sympathies. The authorities had little motivation to persecute Socinian writers, let alone their Dutch printers. In 1651 Joan Blaeu became a councillor of Amsterdam, entering the highest echelons of power. His unorthodox publishing would not be prosecuted again.

During the course of the 1650s and 1660s Socinian books continued to be published in Holland, appearing under imprints like 'Raków', 'Vrijburg', 'Eleutheropolis' (Free City) and 'Irenopolis' (Peace City).²¹ Others were published with false dates, antedated so as to appear as if they were printed in Raków in the early 1620s or 1630s. The freedom afforded to printers encouraged illicit publications that required considerable investment. Between 1665 and 1668 the Remonstrant minister and bookseller Frans Kuyper published the eight-volume folio *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum*, a collection containing the works of leading Socinian theologians. Entrenched in a network of fellow unorthodox booksellers in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, Kuyper could be sure that this magnificent publication would find its market unimpeded.

The sheer size of the *Bibliotheca* set it apart from all other illicit religious and philosophical works. It was often the only folio *liber prohibitus* listed in auction catalogues. The reason for this is not hard to fathom. Since the dawn of printing, an essential part of the camouflage of forbidden books was their

innocuous appearance, so that they would escape detection by those who wished to suppress them. The *Bibliotheca* was a bold announcement of the new frontiers of liberty extended in Amsterdam.

Such boastfulness was inevitably followed by repercussions. The ministers who had encouraged the publication of severe edicts against the Socinians had watched in dismay as nothing was done. So they continued to watch the heretics themselves. The consistory of Amsterdam had a network of spies who reported on the activities of Socinians, radical philosophers and their publishers. In April 1669 a report was discussed at the consistory that 'various people, of different stripes . . . entertain strange discussions' in the shop of Jan Rieuwertsz, a Mennonite bookseller in Amsterdam.²² Rieuwertsz stood at the centre of a large network of unorthodox publishers, and was happy to play host to freethinkers, who assembled in the safety of his shop to debate, read and buy books.

In 1670 Rieuwertsz was responsible for one of the most notorious publications of the seventeenth century: the *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* of Baruch de Spinoza, a systematic critique of religion. The title-page suggested that the work was produced in 'Hamburg, with Henricus Kunraht', but the Reformed Church was certain that it was a local production.²³ After William III came to power in the Disaster Year, the church hoped that its champion would heed their calls to crush the heresy in their midst. Initially their expectations were fulfilled. On 19 July 1674 an edict published by William and the Court of Holland reiterated the ban on 'Socinian and other harmful books', including their publication and sale.²⁴

Later that same year, ironically, Jan Rieuwertsz was appointed the *stads-drukker* of Amsterdam. That such a distinguished position should be granted to one of the most unorthodox publishers in the city was a worrying sign. And indeed, under the Williamite regime the publication of illicit literature continued unabated. Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* was reprinted several times in the 1670s, and his *Opera Posthuma* appeared in 1677. To the frustration of the church, the regents of William's Stadhoudership did not devote themselves with much more vigour to repress such subversive texts than their predecessors under Johan de Witt. In 1677 the synod of South Holland, which regularly debated the stream of heretical works published in the country, approached Gaspar Fagel, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, to complain about a new printed tract by Frans Kuyper. Fagel sent the delegates home with the answer that 'in such a free country as we inhabit it is impossible to arrange everything according to one's wishes, so it is best to defeat such books by ignoring them.'²⁵

Such a laconic reply was not what the ministers wanted to hear. Yet Fagel, the pragmatic statesman who succeeded Johan de Witt, understood the power of publicity. He could observe that the persistent attacks by Reformed ministers against their unorthodox opponents only served to spread non-conformist ideas further. It drove demand for Socinian, Remonstrant and libertine works, turning them into the prized *libri prohibiti*. And that, to the printers and booksellers of the Dutch Republic, was a welcome boon. They thrived on the literature of religious controversy, and not only by selling subversive books. After all, there were more anti-Socinian works printed in the Dutch Republic than Socinian works; and refutations of Spinoza were penned by leading theologians of all Protestant denominations.

The commercialisation of controversy reached a new height with the publication of Balthasar Bekker's *De Betoverde Weereld* (*The World Bewitched*), a book refuting the existence of demons and the influence of the devil on the world. The first two parts were published in 1691, followed by parts three and four in 1693. The Reformed Church was especially shocked by the work because Bekker was a minister himself, and had written the tract in Dutch rather than Latin, exposing his thoughts to a wider, secular audience. The church dismissed Bekker from his post, and urged its members to condemn his book. The outrage whipped up by the church turned into a lengthy controversy, as others came to Bekker's defence. Within a few years almost 300 pamphlets, poems and satirical prints had weighed in on the controversy, and there were few Dutch citizens who had not yet heard of Bekker and his *Betoverde Weereld*.²⁶ By the end of 1693, 8,750 copies of the book had been printed. Yet this figure is not a real gauge of its popularity. Daniel van den Dalen, the Amsterdam publisher responsible, had overestimated the demand for Bekker's book.²⁷ The first 2,500 copies had sold very quickly, as ministers, scholars and philosophers sought to acquire a copy to partake in the debate. Van den Dalen rapidly printed new editions, but found that the remaining 6,000 copies sold very slowly. In all the furor, it had escaped him that serious interest in a lengthy religious work like Bekker's was limited to the core of Dutch ministers and scholars. A far wider public, of course, could enjoy the controversy without having read the book.

Despite steadfast opposition to his work, Bekker's *Betoverde Weereld* did not become part of the corpus of *libri prohibiti*. It was officially banned in Utrecht, but there too it continued to circulate. By the end of the seventeenth century it seemed that censorship in the Dutch Republic had lost much of its bite. There were, nevertheless, norms that could not be exceeded.

The loss of a supportive patron, a public misstep or a magistracy determined to make an example could have fatal consequences for freethinkers believing themselves to inhabit a free country. Ericus Walten, a pamphleteer who defended Bekker, would die in prison because of his libertine publications.²⁸ So too would the Spinozist Adriaan Koerbagh, who for the publication of two radical tracts in 1668 was condemned to the Amsterdam *rasphuis*, the local prison, where the incarcerated spent their day shaving Brazilian hardwood for the paint industry. He died there the following year. Koerbagh's case also illustrates that it was authors of the Radical Enlightenment who had more to fear than did the printers involved. The printer of Koerbagh's first controversial work, the Catholic Herman Aeltz, was fined 630 gulden. The printer of Koerbagh's second work, Everardus van Eede, received no punishment at all, as it was he who reported Koerbagh to the authorities after reading the work as it was coming off the press.²⁹

Clearly, it paid to seek out a trustworthy publisher, committed to the cause. This is why men like Jan Rieuwerts and Frans Kuyper received so much work from their network of Remonstrants, Mennonites and Socinians. But the booksellers operating at the limits of Dutch toleration still had to sell books. Frans Kuyper, who might be praised as a Socinian champion for his role as publisher of the *Bibliotheca fratrum Polonorum*, did not charge his Socinian friends a lower price. When Kuyper published the two-volume *Theatrum Cometicum* of Stanislaw Lubieniecki, a Socinian astronomer, he received almost 16,000 gulden from the scholar and his Dutch Remonstrant financiers, on which he made around 3,000 gulden profit.³⁰ Before the work was finished, Kuyper demanded another 2,700 gulden to complete the illustrations. Kuyper, in the words of the Remonstrant minister Johannes Naeranus, was a slippery eel. In the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, one could find books for all tastes, for all religions and sects. But for those desiring the most controversial works, a premium was in order.

A NEW ISRAEL

On 27 July 1656 Baruch de Spinoza was expelled from the Jewish community in Amsterdam. Spinoza, a Portuguese Jew by descent, would spend the rest of his life in the circles of like-minded philosophers. His theological views would for ever separate him from the community in which he grew up, the safe haven of Judaism in Western Europe. Large groups of Jews had arrived in the Dutch Republic from the early seventeenth century onwards, attracted by its new status as a global entrepôt. Some cities, like Alkmaar,

Haarlem and Rotterdam, welcomed them with open arms, but most flocked to Amsterdam. Here a community several thousand strong would develop over the course of the century. In the process, Amsterdam would become the European centre of Jewish printing, home to a lively business in Jewish books and the location of the first Yiddish newspaper.³¹ In January 1627 the first book printed from a Jewish press in Amsterdam would bear on its title-page the biblical citation, 'And Israel dwelt in safety.'

The Jewish community in Amsterdam was founded by the arrival of hundreds of Sephardic, or Portuguese and Spanish Jews. They would come to play a major role in the emerging power of Amsterdam as a trading centre, especially because of their connections to the Iberian Peninsula and overseas empires. Most Jews lived together in the Vlooienburg, the centre of Amsterdam's art market and lumber trade, but the community was far from homogeneous. The Sephardic Jews were Jews in descent only: because of persecution in Portugal and Spain they had adopted the Catholic faith, and spoke Portuguese or Spanish rather than Hebrew. Now, in Amsterdam, many came to turn back to the Jewish faith. They established Jewish schools, Jewish scholarship flourished, and new generations of Jews were instructed in the ways of their forebears.

In contrast to the raucous hostility generated by the arrival of Socinians in the Dutch Republic, the Jewish community of Amsterdam generated less controversy. Anti-Jewish disputations continued to be debated at Dutch universities, but there was generally little opposition to the growing Jewish presence in the country, or the practice of their faith, outside orthodox circles of the Dutch Church.³² There were, still, strict regulations which demarcated Jewish participation in Dutch society. Jews were forbidden to attempt to convert Christians; they were not allowed to marry gentiles; and they were excluded from most commercial guilds, save that of the pharmacists and the brokers. Sephardic Jews worked in the silk, tobacco, sugar and diamond trades, and they were prominent as brokers in the burgeoning stock market. They dressed like the upper bourgeoisie of Amsterdam, and became some of its wealthiest citizens. This was in stark contrast to later arrivals in the Jewish community, when German, Polish and Lithuanian Ashkenazi Jews, many of whom fled religious violence in the wake of the Thirty Years' War, migrated to Amsterdam. The Ashkenazi, who spoke Yiddish, were generally poorer and more numerous than their Sephardic brethren, and most made a living as street sellers, day labourers or beggars. This caused tensions within the Jewish community; indeed the first half of the seventeenth century probably witnessed more tensions between these

two very different parts of the Jewish community than between the Sephardim and the Dutch. Yet despite the ancestral, economic and linguistic differences between the two Jewish communities, the Vlooienburg and its inhabitants became a quintessential part of Amsterdam, framed by an overarching Jewishness. It became a tourist destination and a centre of significant economic importance.

During the second half of the seventeenth century the Jewish community became ever more integrated in wider Dutch society. In 1657 the States General and the States of Holland resolved that all Jewish inhabitants of the Dutch Republic were to be treated as Dutch citizens. The opening of the Sephardic synagogue in 1675 was attended by the city's magistrates; and the leaders of the Jewish community were present in the Nieuwe Kerk at the burial of Michiel de Ruyter two years later. By the end of the century the community also participated in all official prayer days announced by the Dutch state.³³

To Dutch scholars of all denominations, the observation of Jewish life, literature and rituals was fascinating. The presence of Jewish scholars, libraries and institutions helped them shape their understanding of biblical Israel and refine their interpretation of the Old Testament. Hebrew was studied at every Dutch university, as an essential component of theological education and philological scholarship. For this reason Hebrew printing, and the use of Hebrew type, had always been a part of the scholarly publications of the Dutch academic world. The Hebrew grammars and dictionaries of Raphelengius and Erpenius in Leiden, and those of Johannes Drusius in Franeker, were immensely popular, both at home and in the export trade. Amsterdam became the new centre of the Jewish book trade. Renewed repression in Italy, Switzerland and Bohemia, all formerly prominent centres of Jewish printing, further enhanced the reputation of Amsterdam as a beacon of liberty.³⁴

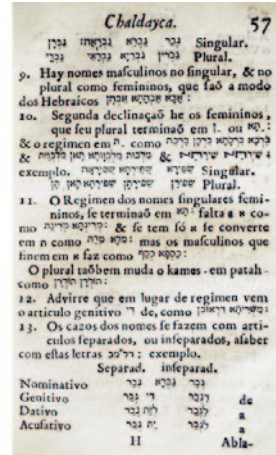
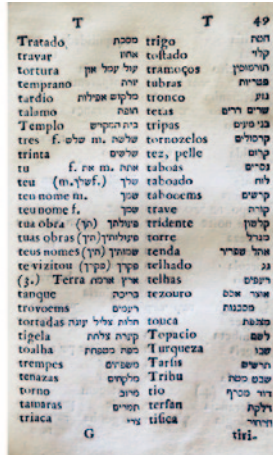
The pioneer of this new trade was Menasseh ben Israel. A Portuguese Jew who excelled at the Sephardic school in Amsterdam, Menasseh became a rabbi, and later one of the most influential Jewish scholars of his day.³⁵ He was also a printer: Menasseh founded the first Jewish print shop in Amsterdam in 1626, and over the course of thirty years he would print at least seventy-five works in Hebrew, Yiddish, Latin and Spanish. These included grammars, Bibles and other books of pious study and devotion, but also a number of his own scholarly works, which Menasseh had translated from Spanish to Latin. Although this was frowned upon by some members of his community, Menasseh engaged in disputation and discussion with

gentile scholars, especially of the Amsterdam Illustrious School, which he also supplied with Hebrew texts.³⁶ He was admired by the likes of Hugo Grotius and Gerardus Joannes Vossius. His work on the creation, *De creatione problemata XXX*, printed in 1635, includes prefatory praise from Barlaeus. Rembrandt, whose house stood in the Jewish quarter, provided etchings for one of his works.

Although celebrated by Caspar Barlaeus and other Dutch scholars, Menasseh ben Israel's books did not make enough money to sustain his household. Menasseh relied on his salary as rabbi and teacher, and also speculated in the Brazilian trade after the Dutch conquest of Portuguese possessions in north-east Brazil. Menasseh was not alone: many of the Jewish printers who succeeded him in Amsterdam struggled with severe money problems. The Jewish communities in Amsterdam were simply not large enough, or rich enough, to generate substantial profits for Jewish printers. The necessity to cater to different languages of publication – Hebrew, Yiddish, Spanish and Portuguese – increased investment costs, and further limited the potential pool of readers.

The thousands of gulden required to set up Menasseh's print shop was raised from members of the Jewish community. During the first years of Menasseh's printing activity he partly repaid this debt by producing Hebrew prayer books and grammars for use by scholars and students in Amsterdam. But Jewish printing in Amsterdam only flourished when non-Jewish traders began to take an interest. The bookseller Hendrick Laurensz sensed that there was a profitable market for Hebrew and Yiddish books abroad. He financed the publication of several Bibles and psalm books printed by Menasseh. This was the start of a profitable commercial relationship, and Laurensz was soon imitated by Johannes Janssonius and the Blaeus in the publication of Jewish books. These were booksellers with large, established channels of distribution and foreign contacts, who also possessed the capital to invest in the paper and type necessary to produce the books. They ensured that Menasseh ben Israel's publications were available across Europe. But while they helped him make his name, and contributed to the reputation of the Jewish community in Amsterdam, they also kept most of the profits.

Soon there was active cooperation between Jews and gentiles in the trade in Jewish books. In 1667 the Sephardic printer Joseph Athias published a Hebrew Bible in collaboration with the Utrecht professor Johannes van Leusden. The Athias–Leusden Bible was the first to be approved by both Jewish and Christian scholars, featuring the approbations of three Amsterdam rabbis and professors at Leiden, Groningen, Franeker and



57 A Portuguese, Hebrew and Chaldean grammar printed for the use of the Sephardic community in Amsterdam.

Utrecht. In an advertisement in an Amsterdam newspaper, Athias boasted that the States General, the dedicatees of the new Bible, had presented him with a gold chain in appreciation of the cross-confessional project.³⁷ Non-Jewish booksellers auctioned the libraries of rabbis, while Christian apprentices worked in the print shops of Sephardic printers. Dutch paper merchants, investors and even Protestant ministers financed the publication of Jewish books.³⁸

The biggest export market was in Poland, with its substantial Jewish population. Yiddish books printed in Amsterdam had a leading presence at the twice-yearly book fair held during the assembly of the Jewish Council of the Four Lands of Poland. Amsterdam books dominated the trade so much that in 1685 the council of Breslau decided not to establish a local printing press, 'because in Holland in Amsterdam there are three important Jewish presses from which books are brought to Danzig and Memel by sea. In this way the Jews of Poland and Lithuania are furnished with these books.'³⁹ Jewish books were increasingly traded just like any other commodity common to the Baltic trade: timber, iron, leather, pelts or grain. In 1670 a Jewish trader bought linen from an Amsterdam merchant to the tune of 18,919 gulden, which he paid for partly with a batch of 1,000 Jewish books, valued at 9,450 gulden.⁴⁰

The export of Yiddish devotional literature to Poland was profitable, but fraught with danger. Jewish printers in Amsterdam had to ensure that their works were approved by rabbis in Poland, and that they would receive

privileges for their sale in the region. The printer Uri Phoebus Halevi found himself with 6,000 unsaleable copies of a Yiddish Bible meant for export to Poland after a Polish rabbi failed to uphold his bargain to provide approbation and privileges.⁴¹

Such investments had to be written off, and it was often the non-Jewish financiers of Jewish printers who bore the financial costs. The interdependence of the book trade could have serious repercussions for every investor involved. At no time was this as evident as in 1672, when many investments vanished into thin air as a consequence of the abrupt cessation of the export trade. At the beginning of the year Joseph Athias, the celebrated printer of the Leusden Bible, received a 39,538 gulden investment from the Amsterdam paper merchant Christoffel van Gangelt to finance the publication of Athias's Bibles and church books.⁴² This was an extraordinary sum, but large for a reason: Athias was experimenting with stereotype printing, keeping the type for each sheet set up in its forme for immediate reuse.⁴³ This was a process which was hugely expensive because of the investment required in typesets, but if it could be pulled off, one could produce a vast quantity of Bibles in a short time span. Athias indeed printed his Bibles with immense speed, but as war erupted, he was unable to sell many, and repay his creditor. When Van Gangelt called he instead supplied him with 12,300 English Bibles and 15,000 Hebrew books, together estimated at the value of 53,034 gulden. Repaying more than 12,000 gulden than was due may seem generous, but the books delivered to Van Gangelt were useless to him too.

Now the wealthy paper merchant was on the verge of bankruptcy, so the books were taken over by Josephus Deutz, Van Gangelt's even wealthier son-in-law. Deutz tried to sell the books with the help of the bookseller Hendrik Wetstein, who had a branch office in Frankfurt. Even this proved difficult, and by 1684 the books had still not all been disposed of. Only in 1688 was the remainder auctioned off by Wetstein.⁴⁴ The whole affair had nearly bankrupted Van Gangelt, left Athias deprived of capital and stock, and haunted Deutz and Wetstein for over a decade. In specialist export markets, the gains could be spectacular, but then so could the losses.

DIVIDED BY A COMMON LANGUAGE

One market of unorthodox literature proved to be indestructible: the trade in Catholic books. That this should be so is not immediately obvious. The Dutch Republic was a Calvinist state, in which Catholics were regarded as second-class citizens. Catholics were excluded from political office, and the

practice of their faith was restricted to semi-tolerated concealed churches, for the preservation of which annual sums had to be paid to the local authorities. Even then Catholics could be subject to harassment and injustice. Yet despite all this, the Dutch Republic was the home of large and prospering communities of Catholics, especially in the Generality Lands of North Brabant and Limburg, but also in Utrecht, Gelderland and Holland. Around the middle of the century, there were 750,000 Catholics in the Dutch Republic, comprising almost half the total population. Close to 300,000 of these Catholics lived in the Generality Lands, where they made up the overwhelming majority of the local population.⁴⁵

In the 1580s the Reformed faith had achieved an unparalleled position of power in the Dutch Republic. Calvinists enjoyed an influential position in the new Dutch state, but it had quickly become clear that not all Dutch citizens would become good Calvinists. Notwithstanding the obvious concerns of the Reformed ministers, little attempt was made to enforce strictly many placards or convert large numbers of Catholics. This forbearance was a necessity in the Generality Lands, the lands conquered from the Habsburgs which did not have representation in the Dutch state. In these regions, lacking the normal Dutch accoutrements of statehood, Catholic faith became increasingly a badge of identity. In 1629, when the Brabant city of Den Bosch was conquered by Stadhouder Frederick Henry, there were two printing houses in the city, both owned by the same families since the early sixteenth century.⁴⁶ One of the families, the Van Turnhouts, converted to Protestantism; the other family, the Scheffers, remained Catholic. The Van Turnhouts were rewarded by the new secular authorities with the right to supply the city with its edicts and ordinances. Their conversion, however, did not go down well with the inhabitants of Den Bosch, most of whom remained true to the old faith. The business of the Van Turnhouts soon folded, while the Scheffers prospered: not by catering to the imposed Calvinist elite, but by supplying the stubbornly Catholic community of North Brabant with devotional literature and school books.

Outside the Generality Lands there were also many booksellers who remained loyal to the Catholic Church, especially in Amsterdam. Throughout the seventeenth century, more than a hundred Catholic printers and publishers would practise their trade in Amsterdam; many of them successfully, passing on to their children flourishing businesses.⁴⁷ The booksellers who remained Catholic maintained close ties to their southern kin. Balthasar II Moretus, head of the Plantin-Moretus firm in Antwerp, was a dear friend of the Catholic Amsterdam bookseller Hendrick Barentsz; the

two men also cooperated closely with Leonard Marius, the priest of the Amsterdam Begijnhof, one of the centres of Catholic worship in the city. They were also closely acquainted with the great Vondel, who penned a wedding poem for Balthasar Moretus.⁴⁸ Northern and southern families also intermarried: Frederik van Metelen, one of the most important Catholic publishers of Amsterdam towards the end of the century, was the son-in-law of Antwerp's Joannes Baptista Verdussen.

These social connections naturally helped foster close business relations between north and south. Dutch Catholic booksellers imported vast quantities of devotional works from the Southern Netherlands: the Amsterdam bookseller Jacob Paets ordered more than 51,500 gulden worth of books between 1619 and 1649 from the Plantin-Moretus firm in Antwerp.⁴⁹ But this import trade was not exclusive to Catholic publishers. Blaeu, Janssonius, and other major booksellers like the Van Somerens and Hendrik Wetstein exchanged thousands of guildens worth of books with the Plantin-Moretus business.⁵⁰ Almost all the books imported to Amsterdam from Antwerp were Catholic works: Bibles, psalters, commentaries, critical editions of the Church Fathers, and the latest Jesuit literature.

The Dutch market was critical to the business model of Southern Netherlandish booksellers. In the wake of the Dutch Revolt, the exodus of Protestants from south to north had stripped the Southern Netherlandish book market of much of its talent. The destruction of the Eighty Years' War, and warfare with France, took their toll on the businesses of those who remained. Southern Netherlandish booksellers continued to dominate the export trade in Spanish and Latin literature to the Iberian Peninsula and to the New World, but during the seventeenth century books published in the Southern Netherlands gradually lost the international reputation generated in the era of Christophe Plantin. The booksellers of Leiden, Amsterdam and Rotterdam had successfully taken over the role previously played by Antwerp as the Netherlandish centre for the international Latin trade. So they bought many Catholic books from the south for export elsewhere, another staple commodity to be offered for sale, bartered and shipped in bulk.

Dutch theologians made up an important domestic market for Catholic books. Reformed ministers required the latest Catholic texts to engage in confessional polemics, a task they took to passionately. The libraries they built during their lifetime included the essential texts of Counter-Reformation doctrine, many of which were published in Antwerp and Louvain. And then there were Catholic texts not destined for scholars or

ministers, the school books, missals, breviaries, psalters, Bibles and hand-books of devotion meant for the spiritual comfort of the hundreds of thousands of Catholics living in the Dutch Republic.

These works had little place in a learned library, but they were an essential component of the market for Catholic books. In times of repression, when a community of believers are denied the ability to practise their religion freely and publicly, the devout turn to books. When Dutch Protestants were persecuted under Charles V and Philip II it was the illicit trade in devotional literature which restored hope to the faithful and strengthened their resolve. Now Catholic devotional books took on that same role for the substantial Catholic community in the Northern Netherlands. With an emphasis on personal piety, martyrdom and suffering, books were important tokens of faith, bonding a community dispersed and unappreciated.

Dutch booksellers recognised the potential of this market. They routinely advertised Catholic devotional books, and sold them quite openly. Cornelis Claesz pointed Catholic parents to a separate section of Catholic school books in his catalogue; other booksellers, like Jan van Doorn or Johannes Janssonius, also advertised Catholic books separately. In a nice twist, when the Catholic bookseller Joachim van Metelen's stock was auctioned in 1681, the auction catalogue contained so many Catholic books that the 430 Protestant theological works in his stock were the ones separated out.⁵¹ The libraries of Catholic priests and Catholic noblemen living in the Dutch Republic were advertised freely as such when they came to auction. The bookshop of Adriaen Moetjens, a bookseller in The Hague, was a well-known gathering place for Catholic book collectors, and the site of the sale of numerous high-profile Catholic libraries.

Aside from buying southern books to sell in the Dutch Republic, some Catholic Dutch booksellers like Hendrick Barentsz had works printed in Antwerp specifically for export to the north. Others, more controversially, took to printing Catholic works at home. In 1626 Willem Jansz Blaeu was twice reprimanded by the magistrates of Amsterdam for printing Catholic missals and the works of Cardinal Robert Bellarmine. The local church council had investigated Blaeu's activities, and promptly informed the magistrates. Jacobus Laurentius, one of Amsterdam's ministers (and brother to Blaeu's colleague Hendrick Laurensz), poured scorn on Blaeu from the pulpit.⁵² After each complaint Blaeu promised he would cease printing Catholic works.

These promises meant little. Between 1631 and 1645 the Blaeus employed a Catholic priest, Bartholdus Nihusius, as a corrector for all Catholic works

printed in the workshop. They corresponded too with Fabio Chigi, the Papal Nuncio in Cologne, who provided ecclesiastical approbations for their publications. The Blaeus covered their identity by placing on the title-page of these works the imprint of the Cologne agent Cornelis van Egmond or the Cologne printers Bernardus Gualteri, Joannes Kinckius and Jodocus Kalcoven.⁵³ That these Cologne books were produced in Amsterdam was well known. In a letter of 14 October 1638, Gerardus Joannes Vossius wrote to Hugo Grotius that he was inclined not to give his work to Willem Jansz Blaeu anymore, because Blaeu earned so much money from his Catholic publications:

This man, more interested in himself than in the common good, hankering more after money than honour, thinks of nothing but profit. Now he says that nothing earns him more than his cartography. He might add to this the missals . . . which he has printed, but which carry Cologne on the title-page.⁵⁴

This, clearly, was a threadbare disguise, and even the Blaeus did not put much store by it. On 3 September 1639 Joan Blaeu advertised in an Amsterdam newspaper seven works by the Jesuit scholar Jeremias Drexel, all printed in small formats.⁵⁵ Blaeu did not hide the fact that they were his father's publications, this despite the false Cologne imprint on the title-page of each of these works. Why did he care so little? Blaeu's reputation for unorthodoxy was a deterrent for some, but it only made him more attractive to others. Constantijn Huygens advised no less a figure than Descartes to have his *Discours de la méthode* published by this 'hard-working and precise' publisher.⁵⁶

Willem Jansz Blaeu's son Joan continued to produce large numbers of books by and for Catholics.⁵⁷ His Amsterdam business became a serious rival to the Plantin-Moretus firm in Antwerp. Supported by the firm's immense capital resources, Blaeu could take on commissions which even the most prominent Antwerp publishers did not dare touch. In January 1672 Joan Blaeu undertook to print the latest instalment of the *Acta Sanctorum* (*Acts of the Saints*), a magnificent hagiographical work describing the lives of the saints in the chronology of their feast days.⁵⁸ The volumes including the saints' days from January to March had been printed in Antwerp, but no printer there wished to take on the next instalment. Blaeu took up the challenge. A month later, while the *Acta Sanctorum* was being printed, Blaeu's workshop went up in flames. Reformed ministers

spoke of divine intervention – at last the Blaeus had been punished for their repeated sins.

The tribulations of the Disaster Year and its aftermath did not end the publication of Catholic works in the Dutch Republic. Catholic and non-Catholics alike were increasingly emboldened to print Catholic books, and met little opposition doing so. While Blaeu and Louis III Elzevier produced their works under false Cologne imprints, other printers paid ever less attention to hiding their name or address. Most Catholic devotional works printed in the north continued to be printed with ‘Antwerp’ on the title-page, but now carried the real name of the northern bookseller, and sometimes even his real address and shop sign.⁵⁹ Others, like the Delft publisher Henrik van Rhyn, used a different witty imprint, publishing one 1691 Catholic work ‘at Antwerp, for Henrik van Rhyn, bookseller, on the old Delft.’⁶⁰

It is difficult to see how anyone could be fooled by these statements. The plausible deniability granted to booksellers by using fictitious addresses gave way to the creation of a distinctive brand of Catholic publications destined for Dutch readers. Northern printers did their best to imitate real



58 A typical example of a Catholic devotional work with a false ‘Antwerp’ imprint, in which the publisher, Gysbert de Groot, uses his real Amsterdam street name and shop sign.

Antwerp books, using distinctive woodcut borders and layouts to offer the reader a familiar southern style. The presence of 'Antwerp' on the title-page was part of this style, not so much a false imprint as a mark of authenticity, a symbol of solidarity with the southern neighbours, and perhaps for some a reminder of the good old days when all the provinces of the Low Countries were united under one church. The authorities paid little heed to this segment of the book trade, in part because it was impossible to eradicate.

It is impossible to know how large the market for Catholic books truly was in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. Like Protestant devotional bestsellers, these were books actively used and read; books in small format for hundreds of thousands of readers, symbols of piety and devout contemplation. Like their Protestant counterparts, these are books which rarely survive, and if they do, we find them in one or two surviving copies. The market, in any case, was enormous. It underpinned many prosperous careers in the book trade. And if one was to wonder whether Catholic books made money in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, one would only have to examine the career of Susanna Veseler, widow of the bookseller-poet Jan Jacobsz Schipper.⁶¹ Unusually, the Catholic Veseler had married a Protestant bookseller, but by all accounts, they enjoyed a happy marriage. When Schipper died, Veseler was determined to make her own way in the trade, and for a period of thirty years (1669–1699) she devoted herself to the publication of devotional literature, especially Bibles and psalters. She worked together with Joseph Athias in the export trade of English Bibles, but made a high proportion of her profits printing Catholic books. She sold so many books to the southern market that at her death she was owed 13,000 gulden by the Brussels bookseller Eugène-Henri Fricx, and many thousands by colleagues in Antwerp and Bruges. She owned numerous large properties on the fanciest canals of Amsterdam, worth 42,000 gulden. She gave her three daughters 20,000 gulden each as a wedding gift, and left 60,000 gulden for her two grandchildren. To men like Gisbertus Voetius, professor of theology at Utrecht and the uncrowned king of resolute orthodoxy, this was a monstrous evil, a defilement of the Protestant heritage in a state crafted from the blood of martyrs. To the Dutch print trade, it was business as usual.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN



Our Learned Friends

THE DUTCH REPUBLIC VALUED its scholars, though rather less, as Hugo Grotius discovered, when they became too embroiled in the nation's partisan politics. Imprisoned in Loevestein Castle for his association with Oldenbarnevelt, it seems only appropriate that when Grotius contrived to escape, he should have been smuggled out in his own book chest. For the Dutch scholarly community, exchanging a chest full of abandoned books for two decades of further Grotian scholarship seems something of a bargain, particularly as this period saw the publication of some of his greatest works, including *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (*On the Law of War and Peace*). Grotius was never able to settle back in his homeland, largely because he could not summon the humility to demand a pardon from the new Stadhouder, Frederick Henry. But in one respect he had the last laugh, for his works were repeatedly republished in the Dutch Republic and enormously collected.¹ Holland's greatest scholar was, despite his exile, also its most successful author, making contributions to virtually every genre of the scholarly book trade; this would have given the notoriously vain and prickly Grotius great pleasure. Such was the power of books to subvert the more short-sighted calculations of politicians.

The enduring popularity of Grotius was all the more impressive, because by the late seventeenth century he was very much a man out of time. Immersed in the classical tradition, Grotius was a product of the late Renaissance, a natural interlocutor of Justus Lipsius, Scaliger and other titans of the sixteenth century. We see in his work less of the empirical turn that would reorientate science from the later part of the seventeenth century. Yet despite this, Grotius still made his mark in two fields, history and jurisprudence, that posed real challenges to the Dutch book industry: history because it was both a popular scholarly discipline and intensely political, jurisprudence because this was one area of the book trade in which the Dutch declined to compete with the established centres of the learned book market.

PLAYING THE MARKET

This book has concentrated much of its attention on areas of the book trade in which the Dutch were either major innovators or where the market was large and lucrative. So it is worth pausing before we close to consider a number of markets in which the contribution was notably meagre, perhaps surprisingly so. The Dutch were a highly literate people and very quickly cultivated a reputation for scholarship and learning: in the case of the University of Leiden, they possessed one of the jewels in the crown of European academic culture. This makes it all the more noteworthy that the Dutch published so few of the large-format Latin texts that had been fundamental to the development of science, jurisprudence and medicine. These were three complex markets, to which the Dutch industry took three divergent approaches; but in all cases the production of local Latin editions of books written by Dutch citizens played an extremely muted role.

From the first days of printing, jurisprudence and medicine had a major part to play in the development of the new industry. Both disciplines were established components of the mediaeval university syllabus, and both captured an important part of the international Latin market. In the traditional hierarchy of learned disciplines, jurisprudence and medicine ranked second and third behind theology, and this is the position in which they appear in most Dutch auction catalogues, as well as the catalogues of public libraries.

It is immediately clear from the auction catalogues that many Dutch collectors assembled an impressive collection of legal texts, mostly in Latin. These were sourced from the foremost centres of legal publishing, Basel, Venice, Paris and Lyon, as well as many German centres. Hardly any of these works were published in the Dutch Republic. This situation scarcely changed in the course of the seventeenth century. In catalogues where 20–30 per cent of a collector's Latin medical books were published in the Dutch Republic, and probably over half of the theology, the proportion of law books published locally seldom rose over 10 per cent.

How do we account for this? First, it is important to realise that the business of books had far more to do with the maximising of profit than the cultivation of reputation; and maximising profit also involved the mitigation of risk. The market in staples of Roman law was organised on a Europe-wide basis. It was far easier to organise the distribution of editions from an established centre of publication than risk competing editions which would likely flood the market. The publishers of the Dutch Republic, as relative latecomers to the European top table, were observing an established market



59 The pharmacist Ysbrand Ysbrandsz. Pharmacy was not traditionally regarded highly among the hierarchy of the medical professions, so this portrait of a man both professionally successful and erudite was making a very pointed statement.

with little scope for further expansion; indeed, the evidence of over-supply was already piling up in warehouses in Frankfurt, Italy and elsewhere.² These stocks could be obtained at very favourable rates; indeed, their owners were often only too grateful to get them off their hands. So Dutch booksellers supplied titles published abroad with none of the risks of initiating a large, complex edition. The mathematics were fairly obvious, and mathematics was one branch of the sciences in which the Dutch did excel.

In this regard Grotius stood out, not only for the quality of his legal mind, but also because he was so exceptional among Dutch legal scholars in finding an international audience. The only area of Latin legal publication in which Dutch publishers were fully engaged was the printing of university dissertations. At least 5,000 students graduated from Dutch universities with a doctorate in law during the seventeenth century, and each of these ceremonies required the publication of dissertation theses.³ Although largely ignored by scholars of legal history, these dissertations offer a valuable insight into

Dutch scholarly engagement with the development of judicial theory and practice during the course of the century. For the printers, of course, this was profit without risk, since the graduating student, or their sponsors, paid for the entire edition.⁴

In the natural sciences, in contrast, the seventeenth century was a period of experimentation and speculation for which the Dutch publishing industry was all too willing to offer its services as midwife. Put less kindly, this was an era in which Dutch publishers served the scientific revolution by peddling borrowed knowledge in Dutch editions. As in so much, the Elzeviers set the tone, by publishing the seminal work of Galileo after it had been banned in Italy. This was a major publicity coup for the nascent Dutch industry, but a flash in the pan. In the early seventeenth century, the key Dutch intellectuals were humanists like Daniel Heinsius, Caspar Barlaeus and Gerardus Joannes Vossius rather than experimental scientists. The one scientific writer of international reputation in this era was the mathematician and engineer Simon Stevin. Mathematics was an area of practical science in which the Dutch came to excel, and where they became pioneers in introducing practical disciplines into the curriculum of higher education in, for instance, surveying. The great land reclamation projects in North Holland of the first half of the seventeenth century paid tribute to the sophistication of Dutch engineering.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic was home to a larger community of internationally renowned scientific scholars. Herman Boerhaave, Christiaan Huygens and Antonie van Leeuwenhoek accumulated considerable respect in the European scientific community. Yet for all their fame, and the importance of their contributions to medicine, physics, mathematics and biology, this outstandingly gifted trio did not have a significant impact in the Dutch publishing world. Experimental findings were communicated by correspondence, or indeed by opening one's laboratory to distinguished visitors, rather than in print. Dutch publishers were generally cautious about committing their investments to the latest scientific discoveries. Instead they preferred to make themselves useful by providing access to the wider European market for scientific writers, such as Francis Bacon and William Harvey in England, and the distinguished medical writer Thomas Bartholin in Copenhagen.

Bacon was a favourite with Dutch publishers throughout the century, culminating in a six-volume edition of his collected works published by Hendrik Wetstein in 1696. Of the eight seventeenth-century editions of the Latin translation of Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (1605), four were

published in the Netherlands, along with four editions of his *Novum Organum* (1620). Of the twelve known editions of William Harvey's ground-breaking work on the circulation of the blood, more than half were published in the Netherlands.⁵ So assiduously did the Dutch promote this work that it can reasonably be claimed that it was to the Dutch that he owed his fame. Within a decade of the first Frankfurt edition of *De Moto Cordis*, Harvey was extremely well known in the Netherlands, with the 1651 edition of *Exercitationes de Generatione Animalium* becoming a perennial favourite with booksellers and collectors alike. A quarter of all references to Harvey's works in book stock catalogues are to this edition. By this time his key works had also found an audience in Dutch.

Dutch patronage of English authors was, it must be said, not always appreciated in English scholarly circles. From the time of the Restoration in 1660, English science entered a period of spectacular development, epitomised by the foundation of the Royal Society and its *Philosophical Transactions*. Its animating spirit, Henry Oldenburg, always kept a beady eye on the Dutch. He implored John Martyn, printer to the Royal Society, to hurry out a Latin edition of the *Transactions* to forestall a Dutch invasion of this market. But Martyn could not embark on such a risky venture, without the assurance of distribution on the continent; and sure enough, within a couple of years a Latin edition of the *Transactions* was published in Amsterdam.⁶

We can have some sympathy with the predicament of printer Martyn, because the English print industry still faced serious difficulties competing in the international Latin trade. The Great Fire of London that destroyed St Paul's Cathedral in 1665 had also ravaged the bookshops and warehouses that congregated round about. The capital resources painfully accumulated by London's publishers were largely dissipated, and the momentum of growth seriously compromised. Publishers were for the moment unwilling to take on any sort of risk, and this particularly affected the sort of serious scholarly books that found only a modest market at home. 'Our Latin book-sellers here are averse to the printing of mathematical books', Isaac Newton was warned in 1670, 'and so when a copy is offered, instead of rewarding the author, they rather expect a dowry with the treatise.' Twelve years later, the biologist Joseph Lister was equally sour: 'I confess that the greatest part of natural history has been starved and abused by the avarice of stationers who have beat down the artist.'⁷

This, for English science, was the prisoner's dilemma: the way to a continental audience lay in publication abroad, as it had for William Harvey, and

by the second half of the century the Dutch were essentially the gatekeepers of this market. Isaac Newton persisted in his search for an English publisher, and his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* finally appeared in London in 1687. Perhaps because it was printed in England, the reception was distinctly muted, and no second edition was required until 1713. At this point it was taken up in Amsterdam, and its fortunes notably improved. Robert Boyle was also seriously concerned that pirate Latin translations of his works would disseminate his writings before the original English editions had made their way abroad. In this case, a developing relationship between the bookseller Samuel Smith and Hendrik Wetstein in Amsterdam allowed for distribution of the London originals on the continent, where Boyle swiftly became one of the most renowned of the English scientists. The fame of the English discoveries was further disseminated by the new review journals, of which several were published in Amsterdam by the last decades of the seventeenth century.⁸ These monthly publications offered a sequence of serious essays on a miscellany of publications, covering science, philosophy and especially history. Though they could never be comprehensive, they made an important contribution by bringing science into the mainstream of European literature, and reaching an audience for whom the *Philosophical Transactions* remained too esoteric.

The question may well be asked whether this ability to plunder the best of European science somewhat reduced the interest in publishing native Dutch authors. More likely, their energies were simply occupied elsewhere, for instance in botany. Here the Dutch found themselves at the cutting edge of scientific innovation. In the first decades of the seventeenth century colleagues at Leiden may well have cast an envious eye at Carolus Clusius, with his modest duties and generous emoluments as the curator of Leiden Botanical Gardens. Here, however, the regents of the university had shown both wisdom and foresight. For Clusius would play a critical role in a field that would define the Dutch contribution to observational science in this new era of exploration.⁹ By the time Clusius arrived in Leiden in 1583, he was a well-travelled scholar; safely established in his refuge on the Rapenburg he set about organising his discoveries into the master works that became his monument, the *Rariorum Plantarum Historia* of 1601 and the *Exoticorum Libri Decem* of 1605. In the established tradition of botanical description, both volumes were lavishly illustrated, though interestingly, at this date, woodcuts were considered to offer detail of sufficient fineness (they were also much cheaper than engravings). At this point Clusius was at the height of his European celebrity. His correspondence, now housed at the University

of Leiden, and made public by the Scaliger Institute, contains 1,500 letters exchanged with 320 correspondents in six languages.¹⁰

Botany was always an intensely political science, as Clusius was well aware. His investigations in central Europe had enjoyed generous patronage from the Habsburg emperors; he would later be invited to England to examine the botanical spoils of Sir Francis Drake's famous circumnavigation. It would hardly be expected that the significance of these discoveries would escape the directors of the VOC. Their instructions to the surgeons and apothecaries carried by their vessels, drafted by Clusius, required that they

bring along branchlets with their leaves, laid between paper . . . Especially of the searched after spices: pepper, nutmeg, mace, cloves and cinnamon, but also of any other interesting plant. To make illustrations, and to record local names and uses, and how and where they grow.¹¹

The value of cloves, nutmeg and pepper were already well known, but later discoveries, such as Manila hemp, could play a significant role in the Dutch industrial infrastructure: there was also coffee and tea. The first decades of VOC presence in the East Indies were dominated by the brutal struggle to subordinate the local peoples and drive out competitors. In 1628 and 1629 Batavia was twice under siege, in an attempt by local rulers to destroy the Dutch settlement. Through all of this, Jacobus Bontius, son of a Leiden professor of medicine and, among other daunting responsibilities, physician to the governor-general Jan Pietersz Coen, gathered the material for two landmark studies, both published posthumously.¹² One, a study on tropical medicine, was published under his own name; his natural history of Java, rather less satisfactorily, was absorbed into a larger book, *De Indiae Utriusque re Naturali et Medicina* (*On the Natural History and Medicine of Both Indies*). This, rather to the disadvantage of the author's reputation, was published as part of a campaign to promote public interest in the Dutch West Indies. It was a salutary reminder that in the Dutch Republic commercial and political considerations could often trump authorial autonomy: particularly when the science was carried out on company time.

For all that, the VOC offered some of the best opportunities for empirical research, and once it became clear that the Dutch would dominate the east, the company became a magnet for ambitious botanists from all over Europe. One of the most talented was Georgius Everhardus Rumphius, a young German who joined the company in 1652.¹³ Permanently established in administrative positions in the east, Rumphius was able during the course

of some years to gather the specimens that became his *Ambonese Herbal*. In pursuing this extraordinary project to a conclusion, Rumphius had to overcome the most unlikely series of calamities. In 1670 he suddenly went blind; four years later his wife was killed in a tsunami. He persevered with the help of an amanuensis, but in 1687 fire consumed the plates accompanying the nearly finished manuscript. It is greatly to the credit of the VOC that they retained his services through all of these tribulations, and by 1690 the dictated text was finally ready to be despatched to the governor of Batavia.

Even now fate was not finished with this text. The ship to which the manuscript was consigned was intercepted and sunk off Brittany. Happily the prudent governor had made a copy, which was re-copied before the manuscript could finally be transmitted to the directors of the VOC in Amsterdam. By now it was 1697, and the directors decided that the manuscript contained such valuable and sensitive material that it could not be made public. It was not until 1702 that this decision was reversed, by which time the publishing consortium interested in taking on this complex and expensive project had dissolved. It would be fifty years before publication of Rumphius's masterpiece was finally completed.

The story of the *Ambonese Herbal* is no doubt exceptional for this extraordinary run of ill-fortune, but the combination of political and commercial imperatives that attended every step of its journey to publication was entirely typical of science in the Dutch Republic. The Dutch botanical community accomplished heroic feats of collecting, mapping and analysis, but the hand of the VOC was always visible, underwriting salaries, providing transport and storage for samples and manuscripts, approving texts and regulating publication. The commitment to science was never altruistic. In an era when two-thirds of those who went east would never return, finding ways to combat tropical disease became almost as important as the commercial exploitation of newly discovered biological resources. By taking on the east, the VOC had added one more layer of complexity to the daunting medical problems that preoccupied Dutch citizens at home, and which already generated an enormous quantity of print.

GET WELL SOON

Unlike science or jurisprudence, medical publishing was not a niche industry. Only a few scanned the heavens for comets, or considered the continuing relevance of the *Institutes* of Justinian to modern jurisprudence. But everyone worried about their health, and almost everyone lost family

members in tragic circumstances. Many suffered chronic ill-health for much of their life, or at some point faced the impossible decision of whether to face the agonising pain, and the risk of death, from an operation, or live with the continuing discomfort of kidney stones, or lose their sight. Sadly, very little of the medical literature published in the seventeenth century was likely to help them resolve these dilemmas.

Seventeenth-century medical practice was all about hierarchy. Physicians attended patients and prescribed; pharmacists mixed prescriptions; surgeons let blood and performed operations. Physicians could only practise when they completed medical training, which 2,793 of them did in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic.¹⁴ Their graduation would be accompanied by published dissertation theses, and celebrations often lavish enough to leave many of their guests in need of a pharmacist. These 2,793 medical dissertations undoubtedly made up the largest category of medical publication, though their formal structure and conservative reasoning promised no great leap forward in medical care. Surgeons and pharmacists both qualified by apprenticeship. It was only in the mid-sixteenth century that Amsterdam surgeons split off from their traditional guild partners, the clog makers, and sought greater dignity for their professional skills. Indeed, the sixteenth century was a great age of surgery, since interesting new conditions (gunshot wounds for instance) led to significant advances in technique. In an age before anaesthetics and before any understanding of sterilisation, most patients would prefer the exotic potions available at the pharmacy to the risks of surgery; surgeons collected most of their fees for letting blood, the cornerstone of the theory of health inherited from ancient Greece and Rome, designed to release ill humours and thus cleanse the body.

For all the virtuosity of William Harvey and the polished eloquence of many Dutch medical writers, this was not an era of great advances in medical treatment. Life expectancy was low, particularly among the poor; Amsterdam was ravaged by repeated epidemics of bubonic plague until 1665. Plague inspired a considerable print debate, none of which came close to identifying fleas as carriers of the plague bacilli. The chief cause of plague, in the eyes of medical writers, was sin. Plague was *de gave Gods*, God's gift, and the only protection lay in repentance.¹⁵ This primacy of theological diagnosis remained largely unchallenged throughout the Golden Age, and such prophylactic measures as were introduced, for example improved public hygiene, were largely fortuitous.

The chief impact of medical publishing in the seventeenth century was to break down the strict hierarchies of the medical profession. Only



60 This medical compendium, with its appendix on the art of distillery, would have been a very common purchase for Dutch households. To judge by the title-page engraving, with its bloodletting and examination of urine, the approach to medical practice was entirely traditional.

physicians could prescribe, and only pharmacists could mix a prescription, but anyone could write a book, and many did. Johan van Beverwijck's compendium of medicine, the *Schat der Gesontheit* (*Treasure of Health*), was a national bestseller. Nicolaes Tulp, the physician and later burgomaster immortalised in Rembrandt's famous picture, *The Anatomy Lesson*, was also an influential author. Tulp was a firm believer in the classical theories of Galen and Hippocrates, and dismissed William Harvey's ground-breaking work on the circulation of the blood. He did, however, offer shrewd clinical analysis of the medical histories and autopsies recorded in his *Observationes Medicae* of 1641.¹⁶

These popular books by respected members of the profession found themselves in competition with a bewildering miscellany of nostrums, treatments and theories by a variety of the technically qualified and frankly opportunist. In the first category we should place Cornelis Bontekoe, whose work was modern in the sense that it reflected the new relationship between medicine, botany and overseas empire. Bontekoe is now mostly known as an impassioned promoter of the medical properties of tea. He also regarded

scurvy, the quintessential disease of ocean voyages, as the mother of all diseases. Other conditions, from fevers to smallpox, were in his view, 'branches of the evil tree' of scurvy. Unfortunately Bontekoe, who unlike his famous mariner namesake never went to sea, failed to recognise vitamin deficiency as the cause, but instead blamed a variety of evils from the weather to unsuitable clothing and copulation, particularly 'whoring, adultery and the scandalous relations that occur between persons of the same sex and between man and beast'.¹⁷

Not surprisingly, even those who bought these books treated medical literature with a certain degree of scepticism. After all, many had empirical evidence from their own lives that expensively treated friends did not get better. Physicians, competing for a limited number of wealthy clients, had a well-earned reputation for telling their best-connected patients what they wanted to hear. The pompous self-regard of the academic physician was frequently mocked in literature and on the stage. Physicians did not help themselves by a tendency towards jealousy and infighting, furiously denouncing rivals in their books. Bontekoe introduced his professional colleague Pieter Bernagie as a man whose 'head was full of air, his heart full of envy, his tongue full of gall and his pen full of lies'.¹⁸ All of this only reduced the general stock of academic medicine, opening the door to a variety of unlicensed practitioners to set out their stall in person or in print.

In 1688, to take one example, Johan van Dueren published a 426-page attack on uroscopy: *De Ontdekking der Bedriegerijen vande Gemeene Pis-besienders* (*Discovery of the Deceptions of the Ordinary Piss-examiners*). This book was long, learned and in Dutch, published with a beautiful title-page engraving, representing the uroscopist examining his sample. The book was dedicated to Stephen Blankaart, a respected academic doctor who, in turn, dedicated works such as *De Nieuwe Nederlantsche Apothekers Winckel* (*The New Dutch Apothecary Shop*, 1678) to Van Dueren. Van Dueren was an oculist and came from a family who advertised medical cures for a vast range of diseases through their herbal baths. The opportunities for those without formal medical training were greatly augmented by the development of medical advertising. Advertisements promoting new books and offering cures proliferated in the last three decades of the seventeenth century.¹⁹ Most were placed by booksellers, who often stocked a limited range of medical potions alongside their books, but a good number, about a third of the total, were placed by unqualified oculists, stone-cutters and alchemists. The newspapers gave these occupations a new lease of life, because Dutch cities had taken action to prevent them advertising by

posting up their own announcements of potions with magical qualities in public spaces.²⁰ Now they could use the newspapers to invite clients to visit them, or to advertise where they could be found. Jacob Goeree, for instance, took space in the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* to advertise a tour taking in Middelburg, Leidschendam, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, where he would be selling his special potion that would cure stones in the bladder.

How wonderful that would have been had it been any use; for sufferers facing the nightmare prospect of an operation for the stone, it was very tempting to try anything. In practice, of course, most of this trade brought no relief to the credulous, and good money for the newspaper proprietors. The most useful medical function performed by the newspapers was probably none of the above, but the placing of notices by municipalities cancelling their markets because of outbreaks of plague.²¹ That, at least, performed a public service in preventing the gatherings of people most likely to spread the plague bacilli. And medical publishing performed one other useful service, the popularisation of the almanac, one of the most ubiquitous and now most fugitive forms of popular print.²² Almanacs were originally necessary to provide guidance to doctors on the propitious days for treatment (especially bloodletting). They developed as ubiquitous manuals of dates, of astrological tables, saints' and market days, and notable anniversaries. Some were printed with blank pages to be used as a diary for notetaking (which is why some were retained by the owners, and have survived to this day).²³ By the 1740s the astrological-medical instructions which were their original purpose had disappeared from Dutch almanacs, signalling the final defeat of the Galenic theory of the humours. That, at least, was a sort of progress.

TRUE HISTORY

In the Dutch Republic, the market for history was potentially enormous. Any self-aware collector of books decorated their shelves with imposing folio histories, often great Latin chronicles in the tradition of Tacitus or Livy. History was a fashionable genre, and we find extraordinarily large collections of historical works, both of classical and contemporary history, in the libraries of seventeenth-century Dutch statesmen; ministers, lawyers and doctors also liked to own history books. History sold so well because it was a genre which, unlike jurisprudence, could be enjoyed by all sorts of readers. It was an irreproachably scholarly genre, so floated above the criticism heaped on the archaic chivalric tales of *Amadis de Gaule* and his consorts; in some ways history books filled a gap in the market between the vogue for

chivalric tales in the sixteenth century, and the rise of the novel in the eighteenth. Most of all it offered the sort of texts that readers required for their leisure reading. Histories and chronicles recounted great deeds, described momentous events and brought to life real heroes and villains. History was also an extension of politics, passing the first judgement on events in which its readers had often participated. History was a source of military strategy, of diplomacy, of legal precedent and of cultural memory. It was also essential to a new nation keen to lay claim to a historical heritage.

It was this last issue that particularly bedevilled the Dutch. Finding themselves sovereign, free of their bonds to Habsburg Spain or any other overlord, the Dutch were ruefully aware that the legitimacy of their new republican experiment was dubious at best.²⁴ Dukes, counts, bishops or lords had always ruled the provinces of the Low Countries. In the eyes of foreign visitors, their 'High Mightinesses', as the delegates of the States General wished to be known, were pretentious bourgeois traders. In 1586, a member of the retinue of the Earl of Leicester described them as 'sovereign lords shitpepper, street vendor, cheeseman and miller.'²⁵

Such statements would not be said to their face, but the regents knew this contempt pervaded foreign courts. In some ways it did not matter, because soon foreign potentates came to The Hague and Amsterdam to request loans for their wars, or refuge in time of exile. But the nagging absence of a distinguished past weighed heavily on the political elite of the Dutch Republic. The solution was to paint Dutch history in a favourable light, and the authorities quickly found that the easiest way to do so was to hire a scholar and his pen – or to reward ostentatiously those who created the appropriate narratives. From the first days of their independence, the provinces, wealthy Holland first and foremost, appointed official historiographers to trace their illustrious ancestors. One of the first historians of Holland, the young Hugo Grotius, set out to do exactly that.

The Dutch, like many European peoples, looked upon ancient Rome with admiration. To their delight, Dutch scholars found that Tacitus, the greatest historian of ancient Rome, had described in his *Germania* a freedom-loving and valorous people who inhabited the territories around the great Dutch rivers: the Batavians. These Batavians, in the account of Tacitus, were the bravest of all the Germanic tribes. They had sometimes cooperated with Rome, but never subjected themselves fully to the might of the empire. 'Batavia' rapidly became a political synonym for the northern provinces in the sixteenth century, and the term itself attracted generous attention from scholars and historians.²⁶ In 1610 Grotius published his *Liber*

de Antiquitate Reipublicae Batavae, appearing in the same year in Dutch, in which he drew comparisons between the ancient constitution of the Batavians and the new Dutch state. The sovereignty of the Dutch Republic was justified as a long overdue return to the natural state of Dutch liberty.

The efforts of the historiographers of state were scrutinised closely by their paymasters. Support was sometimes withdrawn: Grotius's next historical effort, his *Annales et Historiae*, a history of the Dutch Revolt in imitation of Tacitus, was deemed unsuitable to be published by the States of Holland in 1612 as the developing crisis of the Twelve Years' Truce pitted conflicting viewpoints on the legacy of the revolt against one another. The chronicle of the Dutch Revolt written by Emanuel van Meteren, first published in Dutch in 1599, was received with indignation by the States of Holland and Utrecht and the States General for perceived slights of their authority. Copies of the work were confiscated, and the chronicle was approved only after a heavily revised edition was presented in 1614.²⁷

When they did value their historians, the regents certainly showed it. The Dutch States paid substantial salaries and fees for historical tomes that celebrated the achievements of their forefathers and praised the Dutch Golden Age.²⁸ Petrus Scriverius received a golden chalice worth 250 gulden from the States of Holland for his *Batavia Illustratae* in 1609, while Janus Dousa received a golden chain worth 600 gulden for his *Bataviae Hollandiaeque Annales* in 1601. Paulus Merula enjoyed a stipend of 600 gulden a year for his position as historiographer of Holland, while in the 1620s Daniel Heinsius received 750 gulden a year (on top of his generous salary as professor at Leiden) to write a new history of the war against Spain. Sadly, this lavish appointment only resulted in a history of the recent siege of Den Bosch.²⁹

Historians of state also received privileges unobtainable by ordinary scholars: they enjoyed access to closed state archives, and sometimes the authorities helped them build their own reference collection. In 1668 the States of Holland bought for their historiographer Isaac Vossius a rare manuscript worth 200 gulden.³⁰ The States of Gelderland paid their historian, Johannes Isaacius Pontanus, 956 gulden to acquire source material for his history of the province. The Geldrian regents were especially concerned about the publication of their own chronicle, because the province was the only historic duchy in the Dutch Republic, and arguably had a more illustrious past than any other province. Nevertheless the completion of the proposed *Historiae Gelricae* took forty years, due to the untimely demise of the first two historians to take on the project, the complications of the war

against Spain, and the local rivalries of the Geldrian towns. The States were so relieved when Pontanus finished the book that they paid him 1,000 gulden. They also ordered 300 copies from the publisher, Johannes Janssonius, to be distributed among the towns of the province and to be used as presentation copies.³¹

Pontanus's history, like those of his fellow historiographers, was a large, beautiful work, designed as much for display as for consultation. Large works were often a substantial gamble for a publisher, but in such cases the guaranteed support of the authorities mitigated most of the risk. Publishing history was much more risky for publishers who were tempted by the allure of great rewards but took on a project without the assurance of official support. Mattheus Smallegange, author of a new chronicle of Zeeland, discovered this when he tried to raise money for his work by appealing to the nobility of the province.³² He assured the patrician class that their families would be included if they paid for a copy in advance; the lower nobility could have their genealogy listed if they paid an additional 42 gulden. This did not go down well with the Zeeland patriciate, and it took almost two decades for the chronicle to be published. It was considered more civil to reward an author with a generous gift when presented with a handsome folio than to be required to pay up front for flattery. Even then a publisher might receive nothing. In 1650 the *Principes Hollandiae et Westfrisiae* of Petrus Scriverius, a compendium of the counts of Holland, was published in Haarlem by the bookseller-engraver Pieter Soutman. Richly illustrated with numerous portraits, the work was offered by Soutman to the States of Holland and Zeeland, and the burgomasters of Haarlem, in the hope of receiving multiple remunerations. After drawing a blank with all three, Soutman dedicated a copy of the work to King Philip IV of Spain.³³ One can only hope the irony of the gesture passed the king by.

If Dutch citizens were proud of anything, it was their hometown. So when Johannes Isaacius Pontanus produced a lengthy history of Amsterdam in 1611, it was only a matter of time before the regents of other cities were eager to see their own home celebrated in print.³⁴ Almost all major Dutch towns would have their chronicle published in the seventeenth century. Many were produced by local scholars, but some found a knack for urban history, like the minister Jacob van Oudenhoven, who produced successive histories of towns as diverse as Den Bosch, Heusden, Dordrecht and Haarlem. In the Dutch Republic even villages could have their history canonised in print. The engineer and inventor Jan Adriaensz Leeghwater wrote a short history and description of De Rijk, in North Holland, together

with the neighbouring village of Graft. De Rijp, one would not be surprised to learn, was 'the best village in Holland'.³⁵

Leeghwater's history found a receptive audience, and it was reprinted at least four times before the end of the century. Urban histories were written predominantly in Dutch, unlike the great Latin tomes commissioned by the States. But to sell, these histories had to please. When the final expansion of Amsterdam's canals was completed in the 1660s, several new histories appeared in rapid succession, each more laudatory than the next. Melchior Fockens, whose description appeared as a cheap duodecimo volume for the more modest Amsterdammer, announced

I hereby begin the description of that greatest commercial city of Europe; actually it can truthfully be said that Amsterdam has in our time risen to such a height that she is not only the most powerful city of Europe, but of the entire world.³⁶

The boastfulness of Amsterdammers was a perpetual sore spot for fellow Hollanders. Not to be outdone, the Haarlem minister Samuel Ampzing emphasised in the chronicle of his hometown that Haarlem had bravely resisted Spain during the Dutch Revolt: in direct contrast to Amsterdam, as Ampzing reminded his reader, which had actively contributed to the Spanish siege of Haarlem. The magistrates of Haarlem were delighted with Ampzing's history, and paid him 600 gulden on its completion, together with 300 gulden to supply 50 copies for the city. They came to regret their generosity, however, because they were soon inundated with dedications in works published by the other ministers of the city. The next year the magistrates raised the salary of all ministers in Haarlem from 500 to 600 gulden a year, on the condition that they would dedicate no more books to the city.³⁷

To the scholar building his library, the chronicles and city descriptions were increasingly complemented with a rich digest of contemporary history. The first newspaper publishers were quick to advertise their serials as suitable chronicles of modern times: that is, if one subscribed to every issue, and bound them together. This marketing ploy was not very successful. News writers were not well equipped to judge the future importance of current events, and newspapers invariably included a fair share of inaccuracies and inconsistencies. Instead the most successful contemporary histories were annual reviews, compiled largely from newspapers and other current publications, but with the editorial benefit of hindsight. From 1651 onwards Pieter Casteleyn, brother of the Haarlem newspaper publisher Abraham,

produced each year the *Hollandse Mercurius*, a 100-page summary of the most notable events of the year to have taken place around Europe.³⁸ The *Hollandse Mercurius* became the essential handbook of modern politics, and enjoyed huge success. Casteleyn frequently reprinted five- or ten-year old issues to accommodate latecomers who wished to obtain the whole set.

Like the newspapers on which it was based, the *Hollandse Mercurius* was dominated by summaries of foreign news. Commenting on contemporary domestic politics was as problematic for historians as it was for newspaper publishers. This was, therefore, a genre of writing which fewer authors and publishers dared tackle. One who bucked this trend was Lieuwe van Aitzema, arguably one of the most gifted historians of the seventeenth century.³⁹ Van Aitzema was a diplomat, representing the interests of the Hanseatic towns in The Hague. In this function he found himself at the heart of Dutch politics, a position he exploited by selling manuscript newsletters with the latest political information to the courts of Europe. Van Aitzema's first foray into publishing was a history of the peace negotiations of Westphalia, followed by an account of the political crisis of 1650, the



61 The first installment of the *Hollandse Mercurius*. Each volume of this popular news annual was accompanied by a specially engraved title-page, summarising the events of the year.

Herstelde Leeuw (*The Lion Restored*). This last work was formally banned in Holland, Zeeland and Friesland in 1652, because the regents were embarrassed to be reminded so publicly of the divisive conflict. Yet Van Aitzema was never prosecuted, and the work circulated unrestricted. It was a perennial item in any scholarly library.

In Van Aitzema's account it was his publisher, Jan Vely – thrilled by the success of his work – who prompted him to write more. Between 1657 and 1668 Van Aitzema produced his masterwork, a twelve-volume contemporary political history of the Dutch Republic, the *Saken van Staet en Oorlogh* (*Affairs of State and War*), starting in the year 1621. The instalments were published yearly by Vely, and when Van Aitzema died the entire history was reissued as seven folio volumes. The *Saken van Staet* was composed using extensive contemporary source material: Van Aitzema gathered together an immense corpus of published letters, speeches, placards and pamphlets, and often copied lengthy extracts into the work. He interspersed these sources with reflective, and often witty commentary. He also flattered himself a great deal, writing copiously of his own actions as Hanseatic agent; observations of encounters in barges and taverns further testified to his acute political antennae.

In contrast to most historians of his day, Van Aitzema did not write to flatter. Some thought him a cynic: he saw Machiavellian struggles for power at the heart of all politics, and had little regard for professions of ideological purity. He was not without ideology himself, and the *Saken van Staet* is generally critical of the role of the Dutch Reformed Church (Van Aitzema would convert to Catholicism late in life); and he observed drily the occasional follies of True Freedom. Most of all, Van Aitzema was a critical writer. There were few who escaped the lash of his wit. His history became very popular thanks to the rich source material, but also for the exposés of the major characters of Dutch politics. Everyone had an enemy or opponent who might show up in the *Saken van Staet* in an unfavourable light. Orangists accused Van Aitzema of being a follower of Johan de Witt; republican ideologues accused him of being Orangist. But everyone kept reading, and the *Saken van Staet* became a must-have item for any collector. The popularity of the chronicle also kept Van Aitzema safe: the Reformed Church in Friesland, Van Aitzema's home province, attempted to ban the work but found no support. The only attempt to inhibit circulation occurred after his death, when the States of Friesland banned the new folio edition on account of a dedicatory preface which singled out the contribution of Holland to the success of the Dutch Republic.⁴⁰

Historians invariably wrote for a defined audience. In Van Aitzema's case, this was the politically literate elite of urban Holland; the sensibilities of his native Friesland clearly came second in the author's considerations. But there were plenty of inventive publishers of history who could circumvent the confessional and political fault lines which divided the European reading public in the seventeenth century. Jacob van Meurs, the publisher of the folio descriptions of Olfert Dapper and Arnold Montanus, first made his name as a publisher with Johan Nieuhof's description of China, printed in 1665. This was to be one of the most influential works of its time in shaping western perceptions of China. The account drew heavily on previous Jesuit works, but Nieuhof included an extensive diatribe on what he perceived as Jesuit machinations to disrupt Dutch trade with the Chinese. While pleasing to some, such invective would inevitably alienate Catholic readers. So in 1666 Van Meurs printed a second Dutch edition, with a false Antwerp imprint, which expunged Nieuhof's anti-Jesuit harangue and replaced it with 'an accurate narrative, of all that the Jesuits have achieved in China for the advancement of the Catholic religion, since their first arrival in China, with all the harrowing and cruel persecutions suffered by them for their faith'.⁴¹

In the Dutch Republic, with its many faiths and ideologies, history was a foundation stone of identity. The publication of chronicles and histories preserved identity for posterity, strengthened the resolve of the faithful, and glorified the deeds of their forebears. Alternative histories could circulate freely and plentifully. Each community cherished its own past, and its citizens parted gladly with their money to demonstrate this local patriotism.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN



The Business Press

INTEREST IN THE ENORMOUS pamphlet production of the Dutch Golden Age has, not surprisingly, concentrated heavily on the major crisis points of the century, when the Dutch system bent and was almost broken: the Remonstrant crisis of 1618, William II's attempted coup in 1650, and the Disaster Year, 1672. All were accompanied by a furious exchange of pamphlets, damning their adversaries, invoking the higher powers of God, freedom and tradition, and including ugly calls for retribution against defeated opponents. This was a pitiless trade, and after the fury of battle passed, the more sober voices recognised it as such. Though these major peaks of production have caught the eye, in fact political pamphleteering bubbled away almost continuously below the surface. Gerard Lodewijk van der Macht made a long career of guerrilla action against the True Freedom in the 1660s, damning De Witt and upholding the rights of the House of Orange when this seemed like a lost cause.¹ This was never more than an irritant for the patient regents, though they would like to have known who was responsible for this constant scratching at a wound that appeared to be healed. Van der Macht made life difficult for them, never signing his work and employing a series of fictitious addresses to preserve his anonymity. So effective were these disguises that it is only now that we are beginning to assemble a full understanding of the extent of Van der Macht's quixotic yet dogged campaigning.

Equally invisible, at least until now, is one further pamphlet surge, which accompanied an event that barely figures in the historical narrative of the period: the quarrel in 1684 over the size of the Dutch army.² In 1683 Louis XIV had again attacked the Southern Netherlands and besieged Luxembourg. The French invasion of 1672 had brought about a complete reversal of Dutch policy towards the Southern Netherlands, now no longer seen as a target for Dutch expansion but as a vital barrier against French aggression. Dutch troops were despatched to shore up the defences of the southern state, but in 1684 William III wanted more: to be precise, 16,000 more. Amsterdam demurred, preferring to believe the assurances of the agile

French ambassador, Jean-Antoine de Mesmes, the Comte d'Avaux, that on this occasion Louis's territorial ambitions were modest. William would not take no for an answer, and Amsterdam would not open its coffers; so began an extraordinary and increasingly public campaign to force the city into compliance. William appeared, uninvited, to address a meeting of the States of Holland from which Amsterdam had been excluded, where he accused the city fathers of entering into private negotiations with the French ambassador. William's ally, the Grand Pensionary Gaspar Fagel, further raised the temperature, effectively accusing Amsterdam of treason in an anonymous pamphlet.³ The city's outraged denials were swiftly made public as each side fought for public sympathy; even the French ambassador pitched in, with a series of pamphlets stressing King Louis's peaceful intent, and defending his own conduct. Strangely, some of the ambassador's pamphlets seem to have been printed by the States printer, Jacobus Scheltus, who naturally also printed Fagel's intemperate tirade.

Soon, everyone had an opinion: the Holland towns that had abandoned Amsterdam, and the representatives of the other provinces. The States of Holland voted William his extra troops, ignoring the normal requirement for unanimity, but after Friesland and Groningen refused to pay their portion, and the magistrates of Amsterdam threatened to withhold all their contributions to the state, the Stadhouder decided to abandon the campaign. Ultimately, as William was well aware, the state could not function without the riches of Amsterdam. This lesson, well learned, would be the basis of their successful cooperation in the invasion of England four years later.⁴

The 1684 pamphlet surge subsided, and is now largely forgotten. It nevertheless tells us important things about the Dutch Republic, because this whole dispute revolved around the two principles that animated Dutch political life and could so easily disrupt its ambiguous constitutional settlement: power and money. This was a commercial state, and the power of government was repeatedly used to grease the wheels of commerce: in the overseas voyages, in regulating trade and in establishing foreign policy priorities. In a society enjoying extraordinarily rapid economic growth, huge fortunes could be made and more and more of its citizens enjoyed a comfortable affluence. And this was certainly Europe's most buoyant book market. Dutch publishers seemed by now to have exploited every possibility for making money from print, with one strange exception. For despite the ubiquity of trade, the furious activity of commerce and the ingenuity in the development of new financial instruments, the Dutch were slow to develop a specialist business press. It took time to identify the ways in which print

could best make itself useful to the world of business and commerce. This was one opportunity that the otherwise entrepreneurial publishing industry struggled to exploit.

ON THE BOURSE

Visitors to Amsterdam in the mid-seventeenth century could find evidence of its extraordinary prosperity in the teeming commerce of the harbour, in the grand houses under construction in the newly settled canal quarter; in its shops and stalls crammed with exotic goods; in the numerous book-shops. Yet for the well-informed newcomer, the one building that would exemplify the extraordinary efflorescence of this new commercial society was the Amsterdam Bourse, the commodity market. Commodities had been traded in Amsterdam in various places since at least the mid-sixteenth century, but in this as so much else it was the decline of Antwerp that accelerated Amsterdam's meteoric rise. Amsterdam moved to the establishment of a formal commodity exchange in 1586, one year after the fall of Antwerp. By 1607, Amsterdam had become so dominant in northern trading that the city could commission, at its own expense, a specially constructed building for brokers to make their deals. Designed by Hendrik de Keyser, the Bourse was constructed as a roofless central square, surrounded by arcades. Here De Keyser followed the existing model of the Antwerp Bourse and the more recent Royal Exchange in London.

This then was a space designed for face-to-face transactions, and for the opening of the new building in 1611, it would have been packed. The city authorities had taken steps to ensure that it would be well used, first, by limiting the time for trade to a single hour, between 11 a.m. and noon, and then by forbidding licensed brokers from concluding bargains elsewhere: on the Dam square, for instance, where information was traditionally exchanged out of Bourse hours. The Bourse was constructed as a place for meeting and striking bargains. Each of the forty-two pillars of the Bourse was designated for a particular commodity or branch of trade, so brokers could find each other in the crush. All the pillars, and much other available wall space, would have been covered with printed posters detailing recent regulations and other news relevant to commerce. These public announcements were all part of a complex information nexus, which, together with gossip and other inside information, real or imaginary, constantly shifted prices.⁵

The frantic temper of trading on the Bourse can be contrasted with the more measured and dignified appearance of the only genre of print created

to support this industry: printed lists of commodity prices. These, rather like the printed lists of exchange rates first developed in Italy and Antwerp, were initially printed lists into which the current prices could be inserted by hand. From at least 1609, the lists were fully printed; it is difficult to know exactly when this began since so few have been preserved.⁶

The current prices were compiled and published weekly by an expert panel of brokers acting under the authority of the city council. Merchants could subscribe to the weekly service for 4 gulden a year, or they could take two copies for 6 gulden. Individual copies were also sold at the entrance to the Bourse during trading for 2 stuivers. This was quite a high price for a single strip of paper printed on both sides but, as monopoly providers, the brokers had a captive market. Booksellers around the city also stocked copies for walk-in customers, and further copies were despatched through the post for sale in Rotterdam, Haarlem and elsewhere.

It is hard to say how relevant the weekly price lists were to the frantic business during trading hour on the Bourse. The price courant was issued only once a week, generally on a Monday. But prices were constantly changing, swayed by the availability of commodities, rumour or even, on occasion, accurate information. By the second half of the century, the double-sided strips listed almost four hundred commodities divided into twenty-seven categories.⁷ Brokers on the Bourse would probably have traded actively in only one or two areas.

Taking all this into account, it seems likely that the price lists functioned more as a reference tool, to be collected and used by merchants to analyse longer-term price movements. They were clearly valued by men of business not involved in the hurly-burly of the Bourse. Judging by the archives in which copies can now be found, from Florence and Milan to Stockholm and Copenhagen, from Antwerp to Jakarta, the price courants were clearly greatly valued in the international merchant community as vital data for shaping their investment decisions. Many were enclosed in correspondence, and have ended up in diplomatic archives. After all, the health of the Amsterdam market was a vital factor in the strategic considerations of all of Europe's major powers.

As a tool for business conducted day by day, and hour by hour, these dense weekly slips seem rather inadequate: and yet this was the extent of the business press. The nation's commerce received virtually no coverage in the news reports of the Dutch newspapers. By the 1680s, London papers carry regular lists of share prices. There is no equivalent in the Dutch papers, for the very good reason that the Dutch authorities did not permit the

establishment of any joint stock companies after the VOC and WIC. The Amsterdam newspapers do report the arrival of ships from the Indies and Americas, with summaries of their cargo. Otherwise, there is no hint in the newspapers of the intensity of commerce, apart from what can be gleaned from the paid advertisements at the bottom of the last page. As the economy roared on, the newspapers continued to offer their stately progression of news from the continent's diplomatic capitals.

The absence of a more active business press seems all the more strange when we consider the energy and imagination evident in other aspects of the financial sector. To demonstrate the point we need only to look at the progressive development of more complex financial instruments to handle trades in the shares of the VOC.⁸ The first share issue of 1602 would be the only one – thereafter the company issued no new stock. Since many of the first shareholders were wealthy men who regarded this as a long-term investment, this was a very illiquid market. That did not prevent the development of a significant trade in the small volume of shares available. VOC shares soon traded at well above their nominal value, and the movement in prices became a well-recognised index of the health of the wider economy.⁹ Traders developed the market by engaging in forward trading, a practice disapproved of but by no means new. Forward contracts were well established in the grain trade and would be adopted wholesale in the so-called tulipmania.

The tulipmania of 1636–1637 has passed into history as the first of a series of extraordinary financial bubbles, fevered speculation leading to collapse, recrimination, and often destitution for those foolish enough to be involved. With respect to the tulipmania, this narrative was established very early, as pamphleteers heaped opprobrium on those who had stoked the trade. In 1655, Jean de Parival could cite tulipmania in his *Les Délices de la Hollande* (*The Delights of Holland*) as one of the defining features of recent Dutch history: 'this mania, like a contagious illness, infected the whole Netherlands'. By the eighteenth century, the image of a nation transfixed and ruined by tulips was firmly fixed in the imagination. 'Oft did a nobleman purchase of a chimney-sweep tulips to the amount of 2,000 florins', according to the German author Johannes Beckmann, 'and sell them at the same time to a farmer, and neither the nobleman, chimney-sweep or farmer had roots in their possession, or wished to possess them.'¹⁰

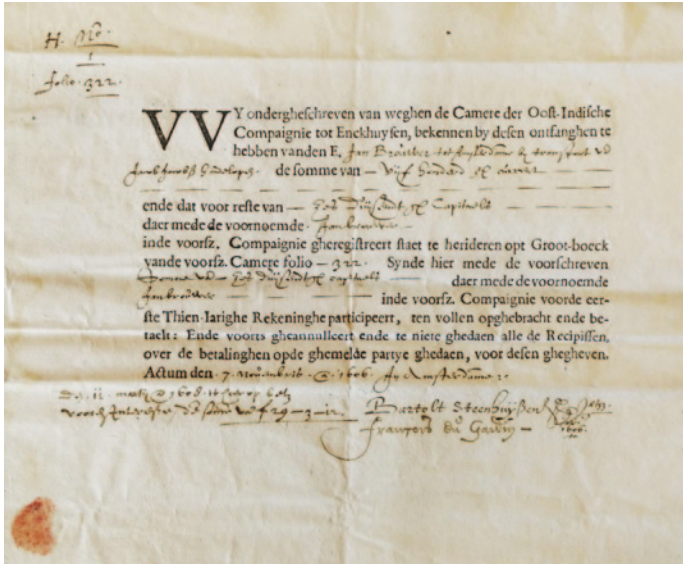
In fact, virtually everything in this statement turns out to be wrong. The numbers involved in the trade were very small. As far as can be established, none went bankrupt; most of the tulip traders, the *bloemisten*, were men and women who could well afford an unsuccessful speculation. The collapse of

tulip prices made virtually no impact on the wider Dutch economy, which absorbed the shock with impressive ease. On 23 February 1637, representatives of the *bloemisten* from twelve Dutch cities met to assess the damage, and agreed protocols, subsequently endorsed by the States of Holland, to deal with the epidemic of repudiated bargains. And that was that; apart, that is, from a rash of pamphlets and disagreeable songs mocking the imprudent traders now that their money was lost. On 17 March, the Haarlem burgo-masters acted to spare the blushes of the respectable citizens tarnished in this way by forbidding 'the little songs which are daily sold by the book-sellers about the tulip trade'. The city bailiffs were sent round to gather up any copies they could find.¹¹ It was better to draw a veil over the whole unfortunate business, and move on.

From the point of view of the book trade, what is most interesting about this financial paroxysm is the fact that printing seems to have played a role only after the event, when satirists could exercise their timeless skill in kicking people when they were down. While tulip prices were in the ascendant, there was remarkably little comment in the pamphlet literature. The busy and well-established Amsterdam newspapers scarcely mentioned tulips. This was a trade based on conversation and face-to-face encounters: in homes, in taverns and in gardens. The tulip trade was conducted among tight circles of men and women who were already involved commercially, or family groups. Many were Mennonites, a religious minority formally excluded from holding public office (and usually also the militia) and so not able to penetrate the most exclusive circles of urban power. Yet many Mennonites were relatively wealthy, and in a confession that disapproved of conspicuous consumption, investment disguised as connoisseurship held an obvious attraction.

Forward trading in VOC shares was also not without hazard, as this was a business extremely vulnerable to the vicissitudes of war and loss at sea. Investors were not deterred. Soon printers were turning out forms with two identical copies of a model forward trade, into which the details of the agreement and the parties involved were entered. The form would then be divided down the middle, with each partner to the bargain retaining their half.¹²

This was no place for the faint-hearted. The price of shares in the VOC fell like a stone in the Disaster Year 1672, and again in the summer of 1688 as rumour spread of the intended invasion of England.¹³ Increasingly the trade fell into the hands of a small cadre of specialised brokers who could deal with the size and complexity of the transactions involved (brokers soon fixed on 3,000 gulden, the contribution initially required of directors



62 A printed certificate recording investment in the VOC in 1606. Although receipts of this sort would have been carefully stowed among the investor's private papers, surviving copies of what are often known as 'VOC shares' are extremely rare. This is one of the earliest examples, noting the investment of 500 guilden by Jan Brouwer.

of the VOC, as the benchmark for a standard share). In other respects, this was a very old-fashioned market, fuelled by gossip, rumour and the hunger for information. The provision of information depended largely on word-of-mouth communication, and when longer distances were involved, correspondence.

This was a world in which print played no part. When what was required was raw information, there was nothing to compare with hand written letters exchanged with a trusted correspondent. The volume of this communication was phenomenal. When the merchant Daniel van der Meulen was forced to leave Antwerp in 1585 he set up in Bremen and, over the next thirty years, he exchanged letters with some three hundred correspondence partners. It has been suggested that already in the sixteenth century some 200,000 letters were sent and received in Antwerp every year. If so, the volume of letters arriving in seventeenth-century Amsterdam must have been many times larger. By 1670, the city of Middelburg alone received 15,000 letters a year from Amsterdam.¹⁴ Nothing print could offer, no scathing pamphlet or wordy discourse on political economy, could match the immediacy and authority of hand written letters from trusted friends, colleagues or family members.

THE ARTIST AND HIS DEBT

Trading in the shares of the VOC was so frantic because this was the only opportunity for speculation beyond the commodity trade. By the end of 1695, there were at least 150 joint stock companies in England – facilitated, rather ironically, by the influx of Dutch financiers who came with William of Orange after 1688.¹⁵ This did not catch on in the Republic itself, and the result was a conspicuous absence of suitable vehicles for investing surplus capital in the second half of the century. By 1670, the great projects that had absorbed so much venture capital in the first half of the century were at an end. The major land reclamation projects undertaken in the first part of the century were mostly over by the time of tulipmania in 1638. There would be no further significant change to the physical landscape of the Republic until the draining of the Haarlemmermeer (the present location of Schiphol airport) between 1837 and 1854. The passenger canals, that intricate network of inland waterways that so impressed visitors, slashed the cost of internal communication and revolutionised domestic trade; but these projects were also largely concluded by 1670.¹⁶



63 A map of the newly reclaimed land of the Schermer, one of the greatest such projects in North Holland, showing the plots now available for cultivation.

In the absence of major projects to drain money out of the economy, surplus capital looking for a home tended to be invested in very traditional ways – in the case of the wealthy, in government debt that provided a regular income, elsewhere, in the credit and debt economy. This rather grimy world has not yet found its place in the narrative of the Dutch Golden Age. We know that the Dutch spent their new wealth freely on consumer goods, and not least on books. We hear about the great institutions, the Bourse and particularly the *Wisselbank* or deposit bank. This was indeed a great and remarkable institution, a place for traders and rich magnates to stash away substantial sums of money, to be called upon when needed for trading and expenditure. The low interest rates established by the *Wisselbank* and similar institutions in Middelburg, Delft and Rotterdam also helped to encourage trade. Yet this is only half the story, the respectable half, which the Dutch were keen for foreign observers to admire. Beyond this, we see a scrambling disorderly world of lending and borrowing with few clear rules and virtually no standards.¹⁷

We can explore this grubby nexus of hurried bargains and callous evasion of repayment by re-entering the chaotic world of Rembrandt. The painter's experience of high finance was so invariably calamitous that we are inclined to think of him as a naïve victim. But Rembrandt was certainly capable of dodgy dealings on his own account. We see this when in 1656 Rembrandt, preparing for his declaration of bankruptcy, tried to protect his house and his remaining property by transferring ownership to his son Titus. This was an extraordinarily devious manoeuvre. At the same time he had Titus, at this point aged 13, make a will leaving everything to his father, with nothing for the family of Rembrandt's deceased wife. Saskia's will had in fact made complex provision to protect Titus's interests against his spendthrift father. Within a few years, the projected part of Titus's inheritance far exceeded Rembrandt's net worth. So when Rembrandt emerged from bankruptcy protection in 1660, he forced his son and Hendrickje Stoffels, now described in official documentation as his wife, to form a company that took responsibility for his financial affairs, and from which Rembrandt would draw a salary. The legal documents specifically required Titus, now 18, to sink all of his capital into the company, in effect a vehicle to protect Rembrandt from his creditors.¹⁸ Titus and the long-suffering Hendrickje gained no discernible benefit from an instrument created to give Rembrandt an income (1,500 gulden a year) on which his creditors could make no claim.

The crisis of 1656 had been precipitated by the decision of Rembrandt's patron, Jan Six, to sell 1,000 gulden of Rembrandt's debt. By exposing

Rembrandt to his creditors in this way, Six had found an extremely public way to terminate a relationship that was an increasing embarrassment.¹⁹ This had its effect on Rembrandt, not least in his decision to file for bankruptcy. But the debt sold on by Six brought no-one any benefit: the afterlife of this financial obligation is a further extraordinary parable of real life in the interstices of Dutch finance. In 1657, the purchaser of Six's debt, Gerbrand Ornia, despairing of any relief from the now bankrupt Rembrandt, demanded repayment from Lodewijk van Ludick, the friend who had rashly stood as Rembrandt's guarantor to Jan Six. Twice Rembrandt acknowledged his obligation to Van Ludick in notarised documents. By 1664 Van Ludick had still seen none of his money, so sold on Rembrandt's obligation for a quantity of cloth to Harmen Becker (the following year he would sell his own house to pay his own debts). Becker now turned the screw on Rembrandt, three years later recovering another debt but not Six's original loan. Rembrandt's promise to pay back the money was guaranteed by his son, who shortly afterwards died. At this point Rembrandt owed his son 13,000 gulden. When Rembrandt died the following year, the original debt to Six had not been repaid, and never would be, despite passing through several pairs of hands and being the subject of eleven separate legal agreements or judgements.²⁰

Oh, to be a notary in seventeenth-century Amsterdam! Readers appalled by this litany of greed and double-dealing may take some grim satisfaction from the fact that Rembrandt's shifty manoeuvres ultimately failed to save his house. This too tells a story about life in the Golden Age. In the Dutch Republic, everything was political, not least because of the magistrates' power to intervene in business affairs. You could take a case to court, and the chance that you might win or lose had a lot to do with political influence: it mattered whether you had friends among the judges, or whether those to whom the judges owed a favour looked on you kindly. On other occasions, the magistrates could intervene in financial matters directly, to forgive debt due to the council (a major owner of city property) or accept service in lieu. The magistrates could also formally recognise debt, which gave it priority over debt not guaranteed by the city.

So the annual elections of the local magistrates could have a substantial influence on your financial prospects by bringing into office friends or foes, who would look kindly either upon you or on those pursuing you for money. Many a paper fortune was blown away by a shift in municipal offices. This was the undoing of Rembrandt's old patron, Hendrick Uylenburgh. In 1658, Uylenburgh was on very good terms with that year's burgomasters, and managed to obtain both sweet terms for his own significant debt to the

council and a sympathetic hearing for Titus, for whom he stood as financial guardian. But the elections of 1659 brought in new men, a shift in personnel that stripped away the protection so carefully erected around Titus's inheritance: for the simple reason that one of those elected was Rembrandt's principal creditor.

Rembrandt was imprudent in his spending, his choices and his friends. How much better had he befriended the Amsterdam schoolmaster Caspar Luyken, the author of the *Onfeylbare Regel van Winste sonder Verlies* (*Infallible Rule of Profit without Loss*), published by his son Christoffel in Amsterdam.²¹ Rembrandt had never bothered to learn these rules, or anything like them, and now he paid the penalty. On 22 February 1658, Rembrandt appeared with his creditor Cornelis Witsen at the cashier's window of the Insolvency Court. The house for which he had paid 13,000 gulden of borrowed money was sold to pay his debts. Rembrandt was handed a receipt for the balance, and other paltry assets, which he had immediately to pass to his principal creditor.²²

No high-minded tract on political economy, no jeremiad on the stock exchange such as the *Confusión de Confusiones* (1688) by Joseph Penso de la Vega, no primer on interest or arithmetic, could do justice to the reality of financial life in the Dutch Republic.²³ For here, in business, personal relationships trumped almost everything. It required a cool brain, a steady hand and considerable luck to prosper in this closed, confined, environment.

THE MILLION-GULDEN CHANCE

In comparison to this sort of skulduggery, which was everyday business in seventeenth-century Amsterdam, an actual lottery looked rather tame. These too were frantically popular – a way to risk some spare capital on the chance of a huge gain. Like so much in the new Republic the lottery was an inheritance from the south. Lotteries developed as a civic institution in the leading commercial cities of mediaeval Europe, first in Italy, then in Flanders. After the Dutch Revolt lotteries were most enthusiastically promoted by Jan van Hout, secretary of Leiden. Van Hout saw in the lottery a means to raise money for new civic institutions to support the poor. In the immediate aftermath of the siege of Leiden such a venture was deemed premature, but as prosperity returned the plan was renewed. Lotteries would, however, be strictly regulated. In particular, the States of Holland was insistent that no two towns should sponsor lotteries at the same time: only when one was concluded could the next begin.²⁴

The great Leiden lottery was set for 1 August 1596, and the organisers allowed ample time for commissioning the most important printed artefact of the sales campaign. This was a large poster, to be displayed by the small army of salesmen who would go door to door selling tickets. The poster consisted of three parts, in two separate engravings and a section of letterpress. The top section was an illustrated engraving representing the purpose of the lottery, for Leiden the creation of a new pest-house. Cities characteristically commissioned this illustration from their most distinguished artist, in the case of Leiden, Isaac Claesz Swanenburgh. Below this a second engraving illustrated the major prizes, usually silver cups and salvers. The bottom section provided the full list of prizes in letterpress: for the Leiden lottery these amounted to 731 cash prizes, with a top prize of 11,220 gulden. This you could win for a lucky investment of 6 stuivers, though in fact many bought large numbers of tickets.

Preparations were briefly interrupted by a difficult conversation with the Zeeland city of Middelburg. Since Middelburg was not bound by the regulation of the States of Holland, its lottery was due to take place almost simultaneously with the Leiden event. When asked to delay to avoid damage to both their sales, Middelburg declined; in any case its own advertising poster was already printed. The Leiden magistrates were not pleased, but since their poster was not yet printed they took care to increase the prize fund so that the highest prize exceeded the 10,000 on offer by Middelburg. With this the poster could be printed, and distributed to the 450 salesmen. There were seventy contracted for Leiden alone, and fifty for Amsterdam, but representatives hawked tickets as far afield as Zwolle and Bergen op Zoom, even outside the Republic's borders at Emden, with its substantial expatriate Dutch population.

The collectors did their job well. When sales closed on 30 May some 281,232 tickets had been sold. These tickets were distributed among 28,159 individual buyers, an average purchase of ten per participant. The prize for the largest purchase went to Johan van Duvenvoorde, Heer van Warmond, who had invested over 1,100 gulden in some 4,690 tickets; we know that he won several pieces of silverware.²⁵

Now the real work began. The names of each of the ticket holders had to be inscribed in the official register, along with the couplet the purchaser had chosen to be read out with their name at the time of the draw (4,690 times in the case of Johan van Duvenvoorde). These names and rhymes were then carefully transferred to individual slips of paper, which were all then wrapped in a brass ring and placed in nine large barrels. Children from the

orphanage with especially fine handwriting were employed for this task. An equal number of barrels were then filled with the equivalent number of prize slips, each again rolled into a brass ring. When the draw began a ticket would be drawn from each barrel until one of the prize slips emerged. The draw continued, day and night, for a total of fifty-two days. At the end of this marathon, three years in the preparation, the city could bank a clear profit of 40,000 gulden. This was a substantial sum, and the lottery had also generated substantial employment: for the small army of collectors, the local orphans and the print trade. At the end of the process a new poster was printed to be distributed throughout the country with the names of the prize winners. This consisted of six broadsheets to be pasted together. To general frustration, the top prize had been won by someone from Middelburg. For the equally successful Haarlem lottery of 1607, ticket sellers were also issued with a printed table setting out the discounts for multiple sales. A second printed broadsheet set out how the purchases should be recorded in the great book of sales: an interesting counter-intuitive example of a print exemplar for an operation still performed laboriously by hand.

The first great age of the Holland lotteries came to an end with the Synod of Dordt in 1619. Reformed ministers had been enthusiastic promoters of the first generation of Holland lotteries: this was, after all, to help the poor. The more austere atmosphere prevailing after the Remonstrant crisis frowned on such frivolities, and indeed one wonders how much work was



64 A splendid representation of the ceremony of the drawing of the lots in Amsterdam in 1696. The involvement of the uncomfortably squatting young orphan attests to the probity of the process.

done in Leiden for the fifty-two days of the draw. It would be twenty years before lotteries made their first tentative return, and another twenty before they recovered anything like their previous popularity. But in the last quarter of the seventeenth century lotteries enjoyed their second great age. By this point many more citizens had the disposable income to risk the purchase of a ticket, and the lotteries could make use of another powerful selling agent: the newspapers.

Almost from their first days, as we have seen, the Dutch newspapers accepted paid advertising. At first these advertisements focused almost exclusively on the book trade, with publishers and booksellers announcing their forthcoming titles. By the mid-1640s, every other issue of the Amsterdam papers carried at least one advertisement, and sometimes four or five. Gradually others saw the way to make use of this new advertising mechanism. Private citizens appealed for help in locating a missing servant, a lost child or stolen property. City councils and other public bodies also began to make regular use of the newspapers to advertise a new barge or ferry service, the opening of a school, the dates of markets, or municipal building projects for which they were looking to employ labourers or contractors. The notifications of barge schedules and postal routes are also the sort of data that would be included in the ubiquitous almanacs. A notice that appeared frequently in the newspapers was the exasperated announcement that an almanac had misprinted the date of a market – this could not be allowed to go uncorrected.

This though is a far more limited range of official business than one would necessarily expect. Over the course of the century we estimate that the States General, the regional authorities and municipalities between them issued at least 95,000 ordinances, regulating taxation, shipping, transport, trade and poor relief, along with a myriad other details of civic life. These were seldom, if ever, referred to in the newspapers; indeed the newspapers carried the texts of far more foreign ordinances than of domestic jurisdictions. This requires some explanation. The key point is that neither the authorities nor the publishers had much interest in utilising the newspapers in this way. Many ordinances were quite long and detailed, and space was always at a premium in the single half-sheet papers. The authorities, in any case, had their own efficient means to spread knowledge of a new ordinance. But the real point is that the audiences were not wholly congruent. Ordinances were aimed at a far wider segment of the Dutch population than were habitual newspaper readers; newspapers, on the other hand, hoped for a distribution over a far wider geographical area than might be directly

addressed by a municipal ordinance. Newspapers also worked to a fixed timetable, whereas official ordinances or proclamations could be issued at any time and on any day. For these the councils had their own established means of distribution.

The advertising of lotteries, on the other hand, seemed an ideal fit for the newspapers, reaching potential customers over a wide geographical area. So it is an indication of the difficulties faced in re-establishing lotteries after the ministerial campaign against them that the first advertisement for a lottery was not placed in a newspaper until 1658. Even then, it seems that with the ministers still opposed, lotteries still failed to win widespread support. The magistrates of De Rijp had given notice that their lottery would close on 2 January 1659, but in May it was still open, and potential purchasers were invited to come to De Rijp to inspect the prizes.²⁶ In 1664 the magistrates of Veere in Zeeland were having such trouble selling tickets that they were forced to announce that if sufficient numbers were not sold then they would return all subscriptions with 5 per cent interest.²⁷ Clearly municipal authorities sponsoring lotteries struggled to recreate the heady excitement of the Republic's first years.

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF COMMERCE

Most advertisements placed by private citizens in newspapers were connected in some way with trade. It took some time for those outside the book trade to be persuaded that advertisements in the newspapers would be worth the investment, but once one brave soul had risked it, others would follow. Cornelis Mourisz Hobbe, living on the Warmoesstraat in Amsterdam, was the first broker to advertise his services, promising to find employment for promising young men looking for work with merchants or in shops. Within a month of his advertisement, local competitor Jan Braemsz had advertised as well. Advertisements followed for the sale of trees, porcelain, wine or shops. Schoolmasters often took space in the newspapers to advertise a new school, or to announce that they were moving their premises from one town to another. As this makes clear, the commercial services on offer were not confined to Amsterdam, or, from mid-century, the local markets of other cities with newspapers. Because newspapers were distributed across the Republic, advertisers could be confident that they would reach a sufficient number of potential customers.

In the three decades after 1650, newspapers were established in The Hague, Utrecht, Leiden, Rotterdam, Weesp and Haarlem. The Amsterdam

papers faced competition. Within a few years, it would be Abraham Casteleyn's *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant* which was regarded, even overseas, as the leading Dutch newspaper. All of the newspapers found space for advertising; in a crowded market, and with customers expecting news from an increasing range of places, without advertising a paper was scarcely viable. This suited all parties, because by the mid-1660s newspaper advertising played an increasingly important role in lubricating the nation's trade.

We can demonstrate this by taking a more systematic look at the advertisements placed in the newspapers for a single year, 1665. This was a difficult year in Dutch politics, not least because the nation was moving steadily closer to war with its great commercial rival, England. It was a core priority of the De Witt regime to keep the peace with England. De Witt's appointment as Grand Pensionary in 1653 had come just as the First Anglo-Dutch War was coming to its conclusion; his first major task as the nation's *de facto* leader was to negotiate the humiliating peace. After Cromwell's death Holland quickly reconciled itself to the return of the monarchy: Charles II returned to England from Holland, sent on his way with fanfares and good wishes. But expressions of goodwill could not disguise the commercial rivalry between the two nations. By 1664 English privateers were openly harrying Dutch shipping, and war was formally declared in March 1665.

Through all of this the Dutch economy was remarkably robust. By 1667 it was the English who, facing increasing difficulties financing the conflict, were obliged to accept a truculent peace. The shock of war was more political than economic. The war did not cause a collapse in purchasing power; indeed, in terms of domestic spending, these were some of the most prosperous years of the Dutch Golden Age. The extent to which the wheels of commerce continued to turn can be effectively demonstrated by a glance at the advertising columns of the nation's newspapers.

The newspaper year was pockmarked by the usual public announcements. In March 1665 the magistrates of Schiedam gave notice of their annual horse market.²⁸ Leeuwarden and Delft followed suit; the magistrates of Delft wanted potential patrons to know that they had constructed new stabling for at least 100 horses, and would provide a capacious pasture outside the city with grazing for 6 stuivers a night.²⁹ The magistrates of Leeuwarden wanted to sell the privilege of running their bank to the highest bidder. The opening of new canals and postal services was also announced. This was always welcome news to those involved in commerce.³⁰

The newspapers opened their pages to private traders as well. In March, Johan van Dueren advertised 'to both rich and poor that he has opened a

wondrous apothecary, stocked with various medicinal herbs, wines, waters, roots and flowers, where Van Dueren will give his advice to all unfortunate and afflicted souls.' Van Dueren was a great believer in newspaper advertising: he advertised in various newspapers fifteen times between 1665 and 1668. The more prosaic Jan Jacobsz Groeter had two oxen for sale in Alkmaar.³¹ In Amsterdam, still in March, thirty barrels of excellent indigo dye were to be auctioned. The following month, Bernard Hidding was selling 'various jewels, pearls, diamonds, East-Indian wares and rarities, cloths, cottons, skirts, blankets, table-cloths, furniture, cabinets, cutlery, tables, porcelain, Venetian mirrors, silk stockings, Haarlem and Lille cloth and general works of art, ingenuity and rarity.' These splendid wares were all listed in a separate printed broadsheet.³²

Apothecary shops (six of them) were on sale throughout the year, and in September also a gun foundry in Groningen.³³ Evert Brouwer, inn-keeper of the Witte Wanne in Zwolle, advertised board and lodging 'for a civil price'.³⁴ Henrick Veltkamp of Amsterdam wanted all shopkeepers and grocers to know that he had 'the best and cheapest sugar products and spices, including almonds, aniseed and cinnamon'.³⁵ And who could doubt him? Schoolmasters, as ever, were looking for pupils.

Not all those offering goods for sale were private individuals. Corporate bodies also strayed into the world of commerce. In November the council of the Admiralty of Amsterdam gave notice that they intended to auction 350 barrels of Virginia tobacco, captured at sea (presumably from an English ship). The governors of 's Gravendeel, near Dordrecht, had decided to cobble the village street, and invited bids for the contract.³⁶ The magistrates of Arnhem were selling elm trees. The magistrates of Amsterdam, meanwhile, were selling trees, herbs and seeds from the municipal *Hortus Medicus*. The sale was accompanied by a printed catalogue, and the magistrates were anticipating nationwide interest. Copies of the catalogue could be obtained in Leiden, Utrecht, Harderwijk, Franeker and Groningen, as well as at the Frankfurt book fair.³⁷

Of course, in commerce as in life, there were bound to be losers as well as winners. Goods were lost, servants disappeared, rewards were offered. In September a young French servant aged 17 left the home of his master and simply did not return. Even the distraught owner of a dog placed an advertisement for his return.³⁸ Twenty-five gulden was offered for the recovery of a medal of Gustavus Adolphus, late King of Sweden and the Protestant hero of the Thirty Years' War. In October a pendant with nineteen diamonds was reported missing. Here the reward was 50 gulden, though this was clearly

not as valuable as the large diamond in a gold case mislaid in Amsterdam in April. The owners were still advertising for its return two years later, promising a reward to the tune of 4,000 gulden. This advertisement was accompanied in the Amsterdam newspaper by a woodcut illustration of the case holding the diamond: quite possibly the first illustration to appear in a Dutch newspaper.³⁹

This was an impressive level of commercial activity, particularly as this was also a plague year (although not as severe as the previous year, 1664). In October several towns announced special measures to restrict foreign visitors from importing pelts or wool to their market. This, remember, was also the year when the Dutch Republic suffered its worst naval defeat. Perhaps the Battle of Lowestoft would have gone rather better if the fleet had been able to avail itself of Dr Pieter Camerlingh's new navigational aid, 'which allows ships of all size to sail faster than any other ship, be they before or against the wind.'⁴⁰

The year 1666 brought new trials. Looking to exploit their success at the St James' Day fight in August, the English fleet descended on the Holland coast to plunder and destroy shipping. A small landing force was put ashore at Terschelling and 140 houses were burned to the ground. This caused great bitterness. Six years previously Charles II had been waved off with hosannas to take up his recovered throne. Now his fleet returned with fire and plunder. The homeless villagers of West-Terschelling became a national cause. A spontaneous collection in Haarlem was followed by permission to hold a lottery to support the 'burned-out poor'.⁴¹ The lottery, held in Monnickendam, would in due course raise the substantial sum of 10,650 gulden.

Perhaps it was this wholesome event, for what was self-evidently a patriotic cause, that helped renew public confidence in the virtue of the lottery. By the 1690s the second lottery boom was in full swing. Rather ironically in view of what had gone before, a major factor in this change was the new harmony with England. The English economy was powering forward, loaded with schemes and new speculative companies promoted, in part, by members of the Dutch financial community who had crossed the Channel with King William. In the homeland, the Dutch eschewed the more exotic schemes floated in London such as the million-pound venture, or joint stock companies launched to fund improbable schemes. But lotteries returned with a vengeance. In 1695 and 1696 there were no fewer than twenty-four promoted throughout the Republic.⁴²

So great was the energy of this new lottery boom that the newspapers struggled to keep up. The deacons of the Walloon Church of Amsterdam

announced the Republic's first million-gulden lottery: tickets cost 50 gulden, and every ticket was guaranteed a prize. This may have been modelled on a London lottery offering 10,000 tickets that would be sold for £5 each (the equivalent of almost 50 gulden). News of the Walloon Church lottery was reported in the *Gazette d'Amsterdam*, one of the new French-language papers that sprang up in the last quarter of the century, instead of being placed as a paid advertisement. But clearly it was expected that the wealthiest Dutch citizens might wish to take part.

The same paper reported that several of the municipal lotteries were failing to find subscribers. The magistrates of Arnhem were forced to prolong the subscription period, the Amersfoort lottery added new prizes. The unregulated free market was failing, and the States General took action. Henceforth the city lotteries would be wound up, and replaced by a single state lottery. It was this model with which the Dutch Republic passed into the eighteenth century.

THE CRAFTSMAN'S HELPMATE

No state can function without taxation; the Dutch state enjoyed such wealth, and could withstand political shocks, partly because its income was so remarkably secure. The Dutch state drew most of its income from excises, a range of taxes raised from the buyers and sellers of everyday staples such as grain and textiles, peat and salt, beer and wine, cattle and horses. Each tax was 'farmed,' auctioned off to the highest bidder, who guaranteed the state a fixed sum in return for the right to gather the tax. These auctions, undertaken yearly or every six months, were supported by a range of printed paper: the announcement of the auction and the receipts given by the farmer to the merchant to acknowledge payment. Most important of all were the details of the rates of payment, printed as a pamphlet and widely distributed. These pamphlets acted both as the farmer's authorisation to collect and as the citizen's protection against false claims.

The States of Holland, which provided more than half the nation's income, were always looking for ways to raise new taxes: in 1636, just before the crash, they briefly considered taxing tulips. In 1674 the States introduced a new tax, on printed paper.⁴³ This is an extremely revealing regulation, since the different forms of print now to be taxed offer a glimpse of the huge range of ephemeral print that impacted on the economic life of Dutch citizens. These included tax forms; funeral invitations; printed slips distributed by tax-farmers; and advertisements issued by private citizens for sales

and other services. Tax-farmers were specifically instructed that they must henceforth use only printed receipts, on pain of a fine of 100 gulden. Printed funeral invitations attracted a tax of 4 penningen an item. Printed advertisements by doctors, surgeons 'and other artisans' were charged at 2 penningen apiece.

This statute, which promised severe punishments for printers who tried to evade the tax by leaving off their imprint, takes us into a part of the book world scarcely represented in the collections of major libraries today. Such jobbing work rarely survives. We can point to no single example of a poster advertising the potions of a surgeon or doctor. Apart from this statute, we can confirm their existence only by their frequent representation in Dutch paintings; or thanks to newspaper advertisements, where traders frequently announce that further details of their goods on offer can be found 'on the distributed posters'.

We will never quite know how much work this generated for printers. Most of these ephemeral publications have simply disappeared; the odd surviving examples tend to turn up mixed in with accounts or correspondence collected in personal archives. But we can get a sense of just how



65 The Paalhuis in Amsterdam was the location on the harbour where incoming ships paid their tolls – an ideal place for a vibrant news exchange, and the exhibition of recent official and commercial notices.

important this material must have been by returning to the instructions issued to the Haarlem *Stadsaanplakker*. We have met this gentleman before, dutifully attending the city hall twice a day, to collect the various ordinances and orders due to be posted up. But if this was his primary responsibility, he also had the valuable privilege of posting up any printed notices that private citizens wished to display. No Haarlem citizen could advertise a house, an auction, a book sale or even for the return of a missing person without paying a fee. This was lucrative work, and no doubt a valued position.

For many of those in business, commerce was still conducted through traditional channels. Gossip, correspondence and face-to-face bargains underpinned the network of trust without which business could not be conducted. As financial instruments became ever more complex, and the volumes traded ever more enormous, this network of personal connections became even more important. In many respects, print played a more crucial role for those lower down the social hierarchy. Print brought constant updates on how trade was to be conducted in the form of official ordinances, announcements and price lists. You learned where your cheese could be sold, on what days, and for how much. Infringe these regulations and your goods could be confiscated: the claim of ignorance was no defence. The visit of the tax-farmer was always unwelcome, but without print his demands had no legal validity. For those of more modest resources, not yet part of the charmed network of connections that put Rembrandt in touch with potential patrons, and lubricated the complex dealings in the higher reaches of trade, it was print that offered both protection and the hopes of a better future. Book learning could take a man only so far; but for many at the bottom of the ladder, it provided an essential point of entry. To roll the dice you first had to push your way through the door.

We see the importance of print to those who aspired to a better future in the blossoming of a buoyant market of self-improvement: cheap books offering instruction in mathematics, bookkeeping and letter-writing. These are, of all books, the least likely to survive: they were bought, often for no more than a few stuivers, pored over and consulted, and literally used to death. But we know from booksellers' stock catalogues just how important this literature was. We have met Willem Bartjens and his *Cijfferinghe* because it was a text much used in school, but this work and others like it also had an important secondary market outside the schoolroom, for consultation in the craftsman's workshop, or for the son of the household after his formal schooling had been cut short by the need to contribute to the family income.

Authors cannily stoked the market with refreshed editions, intended to induce owners to replace old copies with up-to-date versions. Not all these revisions were quite what they claimed. This was a competitive market, with frequent instances of misleading claims and abuse of competitors. In the 1660s a public controversy erupted between two accountants in Amsterdam, Dirck de Hollander and Burgert Harmansz Geesteveldt. Both practised the art of Italian accounting and attempted to stoke interest in their own titles by withering criticism of their competitor. Both men turned to the newspapers to advertise their own handbooks and accuse the other of misleading the public.⁴⁴ Soon the conflict drew in other accountants as well.

Of course, the principal victims of this sort of professional feuding were not the protagonists, but the confused potential purchasers. This was a market with plenty of room for the mistreatment of what were often relatively naïve purchasers. Unconfident readers would pay a great deal to avoid social embarrassment. One of the major hurdles facing the upwardly socially mobile was the art of letter-writing. This was not just a social maze for members of polite society, though of course the anxieties only multiplied the higher one climbed. One of the most collected of all books, if we are to believe the evidence of auction catalogues, was the *Secrétaire à la mode*, a collection of model letters for every possible occasion, from love letters to reminding an eminent client that an outstanding bill remained to be paid. But as Heyman Jacobi reminded his readers in the *Gemeyne Send-Brieven* (1612), letters ‘can be of use to everybody, rich or poor, noble or not, citizen or rural. Because letters are of use in trade, of need in justice, of comfort in suffering, of certainty in summoning, and strong in advice.’⁴⁵

This was only one of a number of vernacular compendia that attempted to emulate the success of Jean Puget de la Serre’s *Secrétaire à la mode*, among them Daniel Mostaert’s *Vermeerderde Nederduytsche Secretaris oft Zendtbrief Schryver* (*Enlarged Dutch Secretary or Letter Writer*, 1656) or the anonymous *De Volmaakte Sekretaris* (*The Complete Secretary*, 1683). If you aspired to a more sophisticated borrowed learning, you might even be tempted by the *Duytsche Apophthegmata, of Kloeck-uyt Gesprokene Wijsheydt* (*Dutch Aphorisms, or Well-spoken Wisdom*) of Julius Wilhelm Zingreven advertised in the *Ordinaris Dingsdaeghsche Courant* in 1669. According to the newspaper, this consisted of ‘many satirical and useful phrases, pleasant exchanges and witty answers.’⁴⁶

So tradesmen required lots of books: books of mathematics, accounting, conversion tables for interest, advice for writing letters and spelling manuals. A dictionary or two would come in handy for those dealing with customers

from overseas. All this was pricey, and could never guarantee the social advancement which, in a place like the Dutch Republic, always seemed within the realm of the possible. For those who struggled, there were enough examples of friends and neighbours who had come from nothing to build a great fortune. For them a life of striving could reap high rewards.

Practical books for practical professional men had a market all over Europe, but in the Dutch Republic they had a special resonance.⁴⁷ This was a society where self-taught craftsmen could read themselves to a better life. For men of this stamp, the investment on books of self-improvement might have seemed a reasonable wager on the chance of a glittering future. Certainly it would have been better value than a lottery ticket.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN



The Golden Trade

ON 11 NOVEMBER 1688 an enormous fleet set off from the Dutch port of Hellevoetsluis, bent on the invasion of England. This was an extremely risky venture; there was no assurance that the invaders would be any more welcome than when the Spanish Armada arrived in the English Channel exactly 100 years before.¹ The powerful force assembled was the most extraordinary display of Dutch naval power of the whole century, yet, as in any venture by sea, much depended on the vagaries of wind and tide, or the disposition of providence. This was in fact the second time the invasion fleet had embarked. A first departure, on 29 October, had been forced back into port by gale-force conditions. But William of Orange was not to be deflected. Setting forth once more in only slightly less forbidding conditions, on 15 November William and his troops came ashore at Torbay, in Devon. The Glorious Revolution had begun.

English historians have always preferred to see this as a collaborative venture, an alliance between a Protestant nation, eager to throw off the tyranny of James II, and its sympathetic Dutch allies. Contemporaries knew otherwise. In the first weeks after the landing few joined the invading army making its careful way towards London. And when William made his final triumphant entrance into the capital, his route was lined by watchful Dutch troops. This scene, with appropriate scenes of jubilation among the London citizenry, was one of many captured by Romeyn de Hooghe, one of the most gifted engravers of the age and, in practical terms, William's official war artist.²

Observers in Europe's capitals were amazed that William could have pulled this off: the first deposition of an English king by an invading army since 1066. The Dutch had assembled an invasion force of 500 ships, and transported 20,000 troops and 5,000 horses across the sea without significant loss. To fit out such a fleet in the space of two months was the ultimate demonstration of Dutch economic power, and at its centre lay an extraordinary pragmatic alliance between William of Orange and the city of

Amsterdam. Four years before this, in 1684, William had engaged in a bitter and very public dispute to bend the regents of Amsterdam to his will in the dispute over the size of the army.³ Neither party emerged from this controversy fully satisfied, and William had learned an important lesson. When in 1688 he recognised that the war with Louis XIV could only be pursued if the French alliance with James II and England was first broken, he opened up a secret dialogue with the burgomasters of Amsterdam. Only when they were persuaded, and the extraordinary financial resources of the city committed to the venture, could planning begin.

This was a triumph in which the print industry played its part. Stowed away in the hold, along with the munitions and supplies, were a printing press and a large stack of printing paper, ready for William to publish his first proclamations on English territory. But the invaders had left little to chance. Also on the fleet were close to 50,000 copies of William's justification of the



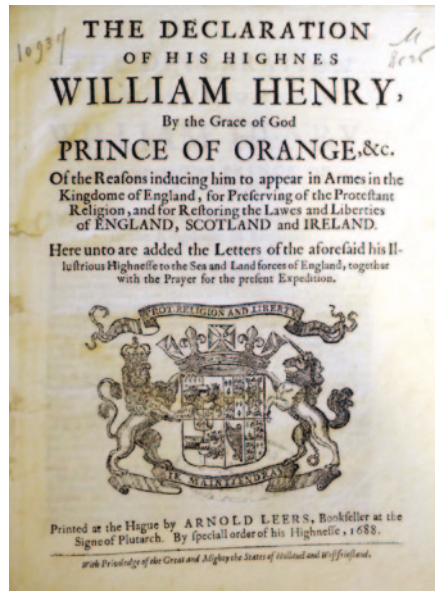
66 The Dutch fleet leaving Hellevoetsluis. De Hooghe was a convinced Orangist, and had refused work from William's opponents during the army crisis of 1684. He did not accompany the fleet to England, but still managed to create vivid images of the conqueror's entry into London.

invasion, an appeal to the English nation to rise in support, the *Declaration*. This was one of the most remarkable documents of the age, and certainly one of the most extraordinary products of the Dutch publishing industry. That so many copies could be published in so short a time was already impressive; the necessity that this should be accomplished in complete secrecy made it more remarkable still.

The text was drafted for William by Gaspar Fagel, Grand Pensionary of Holland and a learned and subtle politician, as his spectacular library would attest.⁴ It was then rendered into English by Gilbert Burnet, the historian cleric who had attached himself to the court of William III after the accession of James II. It was now ready for printing, but as a job of this size would have overwhelmed the capacity of the normal States printer, extra consignments were commissioned from Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The English government was now fully aware that a major military action was afoot, and that some sort of treatise would be published in justification. The English Ambassador in The Hague, the Marquis d'Albeville, was ordered to do everything in his power to obtain a copy. This he was unable to do, despite the offer of enormous bribes. The States printer, he reported, 'is not to be corrupted. I have employed some to see if any of his servants can be; they are all sworn, and their places so lucrative that they will not endanger them.' As we have seen, the protocols laid down for the publication of secret documents required the States printer to remain in the shop for as long as such documents were on the press, so the opportunities for the workmen to abstract a copy would have been limited. A few days later the English consul in Amsterdam reported that he too had drawn a blank, though he had confirmed that 20,000 copies of the *Declaration* had been put to the press in the city.⁵

The success in maintaining the confidentiality of the *Declaration* was a major feat, the more so as Hans Willem Bentinck had been charged with smuggling caches of the printed text to places throughout England and Scotland, from where they could be distributed once the fleet had landed. It was from one of these that King James finally laid hands on a batch, and he did not help himself by throwing them on the fire in his fury. This left one copy, which he loaned to Princess Anne, on the express condition that it should be returned the following day.

By this point it was too late. Once William had landed at Torbay the *Declaration* quickly became ubiquitous. When the invading army reached Exeter, Burnet summoned the clergy to the cathedral to hear it formally read. This performance was repeated all over England as the leaders of



67 A small book with large consequences. The design sophistication and crisp clarity of Arnout Leers' publication epitomises the meticulous planning of this perilous enterprise. The adoption of the royal coat of arms indicates William's aspirations.

English society sniffed the wind and saw who had the upper hand. In Durham, Manchester, Leeds, Chester and Plymouth, a public reading of the *Declaration* was the means by which the local transfer of power was enacted. When William finally arrived in London, it was the *Declaration* that he exhibited to the assembled peers of the realm, to ask how its principles should be enacted. It would remain at the centre of the political debate as the parliamentary settlement of the Glorious Revolution was enacted.⁶ It is hard to deny that this short work, of less than two thousand words, was the most important product of the Dutch press during the entire Golden Age – perhaps its most successful cultural export.

TRADING THROUGH ADVERSITY

The invasion of England is an extraordinary story of the Republic at the height of its power. The invasion ushered in a twenty-five-year period of struggle when the Republic would stand at the financial heart of the alliance that finally broke the spirit and thwarted the ambitions of Louis XIV. Yet it is hard to square with the common narrative of the Dutch Golden Age. There is general agreement among scholars that, by this point, the most

golden years of the Dutch Republic were past. The rapid economic growth of the first half of the century had certainly slowed. Real wages showed no notable increase. The exuberant originality of Dutch art was replaced by a pallid imitation of French fashion. The best years of Dutch literature were a fond memory.

Yet, even after forty years of defending its borders and its hard-won mercantile supremacy, the Dutch Republic was still a formidable force. Its citizens enjoyed an enviable standard of living and the thirst for consumer goods showed no sign of abating. And Dutch households still bought enormous quantities of books – and would continue to do so throughout the eighteenth century.

What do we make of this strange paradox of simultaneous decline and prosperity? It is certainly true that the art market did retreat in absolute terms as the taste for art produced in the Dutch Republic waned.⁷ The decline theme is overdone, partly because it reflects a sense that the distinctiveness of Dutch culture has been eroded. The middle years of the seventeenth century had seen the death of a generation of great masters, including many of the names who have shaped our vision of Dutch art: Rembrandt died in 1669 and Vermeer in 1675; Frans Hals in 1666, Jan Steen in 1679 and Jacob van Ruisdael in 1682. This generational shift is probably far more important to us than it was to contemporaries. Vermeer painted too few pictures to leave much of an impression on the contemporary market, and Rembrandt's star had waned long before his death: partly because his clients had been smoothly absorbed by his pupils and others who, sensibly enough, had chosen to learn from his painting rather than emulate his lifestyle.

What we see here is less a decline in absolute terms than a decline in cultural self-confidence. It does not mean that there was not plenty of disposable income still for paintings – and books. The robust resilience of the Dutch book trade is a phenomenon that is almost impossible to fit into a conventional narrative of Dutch decline. This was an industry that grew without exhibiting any of the characteristics normally adduced to explain Dutch industrial success. In an age of innovation and ingenuity, it was an industry without substantial technological innovation. People made money from books without the large profit margins that characterised the boom phase of overseas trade and industrial enterprise.

When, indeed, did the Dutch Republic decline? This was not a smooth or sudden process. As we have seen, despite the enormous shocks of the second half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch could still recover from the existential crisis caused by the French invasion of 1672 with its international

trade largely unscathed.⁸ The impact of the long wars against Louis XIV on different parts of the worldwide trading empire was very varied. Trade to the Mediterranean was very badly affected by a concerted, and largely successful, French attempt to take over Dutch interests in the Levant, and the North Sea herring fleet was ravaged by French privateers. The domination of the Baltic trade was successfully challenged by the increasing ambitions of the Danish and Swedish crowns. Certain parts of the economy were very badly hit; the north Holland cities of Enkhuizen and Hoorn lost much of their *raison d'être* with the decline of the shipbuilding industry, and the population of Leiden fell sharply as exports of Dutch cloth withered.

Other areas of the economy enjoyed rapid growth. The closure of the Dutch market to French imports acted as a considerable stimulus to the production of goods previously imported from France, such as sail-cloth, linen, gin and silk. Although New Amsterdam was signed away in the treaty of Breda in 1667, the Dutch overseas empire was remarkably resilient. The Dutch remained a substantial presence in the Caribbean, and Batavia, the jewel in the east, sailed serenely through the political turbulence to the end of the eighteenth century and beyond. The government of Batavia, uniquely among the Dutch overseas territories, had its own printing press, and the colony also developed a robust auction market. When he died in Batavia in 1731, the minister Pieter van der Vorm had assembled a neat collection of some 649 books. The civil servant Frans Hakker, who died in 1786, left 851 listed titles and some packets of pamphlets.⁹

Ultimately, the Dutch economy fell prey to the geopolitical convulsions of the eighteenth century, rather than the inherent weaknesses of its economic system.¹⁰ Three key moments benchmarked this process: the Peace of Utrecht (1713), shaped by the decision of the British ally of the Republic to open their own negotiations with France, a negotiation that largely ignored Dutch strategic concerns; the catastrophic defeat at the hands of the French in the War of the Austrian Succession (1740–1748); and the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780–1784), when the British Empire, increasingly aware of the looming catastrophe in the American colonies, sought a compensatory victory elsewhere. This last humiliation for Dutch naval power spelled the definitive end of the Dutch world trade system, although even after all of this, the Dutch could still loan the Americans 29 million gulden between 1780 and 1794, which is not small change.

The book trade, as it turned out, would be one of the great survivors. Books continued to be traded in large quantities throughout the eighteenth century. Judging by the numbers of books listed in the inventories of goods

left by Dutch men and women at the time of their death, the average size of their collections continued to grow until at least the middle of the century.¹¹ Large areas of northern Europe continued to rely on the Dutch market for their books. The French managed to defend their market against Dutch encroachment reasonably well, partly by sounding the alarm early, in the 1640s, when the Elzevier editions were making their mark. Thereafter, the tightly organised Parisian industry, assisted by a sympathetic government, was able to man the ramparts effectively enough. The French, of course, had little appetite for Protestant theology, which helped. Even so, the limited freedom of action granted to printers in eighteenth-century France continued to create opportunities for more nimble publishers elsewhere. In the newspaper world, the French-language *Gazette de Leyde* had become the international paper of record by the middle of the century, with a truly European readership; including in France, where the *Paris Gazette* still enjoyed a monopoly.¹² If the Baltic was no longer a Dutch monopoly for the carrying of freight, the book worlds of Copenhagen and Danzig were still largely dominated by Dutch traders. When in 1727 different branches of the family squabbled over the division of the spoils in the massive Janssonius enterprise in Amsterdam, it was an annotated series of the catalogues of the Danzig shop that constituted the chief exhibit.

The disappearance of some of the great names of Dutch typography, including Joan Blaeu and Daniel Elzevier in 1673 and 1681, is sometimes cited in support of the general thesis of a collapse of Dutch cultural identity, but in fact other rising firms smoothly filled the gap in the market. These included Janssonius van Waesberghe, Van Someren, Hendrik Wetstein and Abraham Wolfgang, all in Amsterdam, along with Reinier Leers in Rotterdam, an indication of Rotterdam's increasing importance to the Dutch book trade. Leers enjoyed such a successful career that he was able to sell up the shop in 1709, when he was still only in his fifties, for the considerable sum of 120,000 gulden. He subsequently served on the Rotterdam council.¹³ This represented something of a trend in Dutch urban life, as the most successful publishers joined the elite. Joan Blaeu and all his sons served on the Amsterdam council, as did the son of Abraham Casteleyn in Haarlem.¹⁴

The Dutch book trade also received a substantial injection of new capital and business expertise as a result of Louis XIV's expulsion of the Huguenots in 1685. The real importance of this latest wave of migration for the Dutch economy is now often downplayed, but the Huguenots' role in the Dutch book industry was very significant. It prompted Dutch publishers (including Reinier Leers) to publish far more texts in French, and the Huguenot

publishers newly established in the Netherlands also profited from close connections with co-religionists who had fled directly to England.

Between 1680 and 1725, half of all the books imported into England came via the Dutch Republic.¹⁵ This was important because Britain was now a buoyant market. The expansion of the British economy, propelled by the growth of London, was almost continuous from the last third of the seventeenth century, and this, together with the growth of a new urban middle class and contentious party politics, helped fuel a vast increase in the appetite for print. The English book trade expanded accordingly, but domestic production remained stubbornly focused on vernacular texts. Despite the new availability of investment capital and an expanding consumer market, English publishers still struggled to find their place in the international Latin trade.

This was a deficiency that the Dutch were very happy to make good, and here geopolitical dynamics for once came to their aid. The long conflict between France and England and the mutual embargo of their goods meant that the dependence of the buoyant English market on imports through Amsterdam was, if anything, further reinforced. The Dutch could source their French books, for which demand was high, in Frankfurt and Leipzig, and they supplied their own domestically produced Latin texts. A surprisingly large proportion of these imports were of bound (and therefore second-hand) books. This is interesting, since although booksellers frequently recirculated bound books on the local market, this did not customarily form a major part of the export trade. Yet in 1727 Dutch book merchants paid duty on 75,000 kilos of bound books, probably something in the region of 150,000 titles.¹⁶

This very considerable volume may have been associated with a practice new in the English book world, and pioneered by immigrant Dutch booksellers, the fixed-price sale. This involved the issue of a catalogue, but instead of bidding at auction, 'every book shall have a moderate price written upon the first blank leaf, so that any gentleman may take what he please at the price so set down' – though only from the advertised starting date of the sale.¹⁷ This raised alarm bells in the English trade. Although English publishers were reconciled to dealing with the Dutch in the supply of new foreign books – indeed, they relied upon them – they were less keen to see domiciled foreign traders encroach on the newly lucrative antiquarian trade. Even the traditional Dutch roles caused increasing friction. In 1733 the London publisher Samuel Buckley petitioned Parliament in the hope of obtaining protection for his new seven-volume edition of the magnum opus

of the sixteenth-century French historian Jacques-Auguste de Thou. He contrasted the liberality of the Dutch in claiming privileges for their own work, while simultaneously reprinting 'the most useful and vendible books published in the neighbouring nations, in the learned languages, or in French, the common language almost of Europe'. Buckley had spent long years observing the European book world, so he spoke with some experience, as well as from the heart.

Great estates have been gained in Holland by reprinting books written in France, with which, as well as with the classics, and other books of literature, the Dutch have for many years largely supplied England, Scotland and Ireland, as well as Germany and the Northern parts of Europe.¹⁸

This is as succinct, and indeed accurate, a description of the Dutch strategies in international trade as one could wish for. It speaks volumes that an informed commentator still thought this complaint was valid in the fourth decade of the eighteenth century, long after the sun was supposed to have set on the Dutch Golden Age.

THE DOMESTIC MARKET

For readers of Dutch newspapers, an increasingly large number, there was little to celebrate in the drumbeat of conflict and warfare that marked the rise of the great colonial powers, and the emerging new forces on the European landmass. Yet throughout all this, the Dutch continued to buy books. Here lay one of the true paradoxes of the Dutch economy. Real wages may have reached a plateau, but the Dutch continued to grow wealthier. While Europe descended into war, the Dutch quietly cultivated their assets. Dutch buyers continued to enjoy the resources for polite pursuits, and new households were continually moving up into the book-buying classes. The book industry made its own contribution to this continuing quiet miracle. For the book world presents a classic case of effective asset management. Through the volume of trade, the careful management of investment, and the assurance that assets could be effectively realised through auctions, the book trade continued to exist on sound economic foundations – in this respect the contrast with the art market, which experienced real decline, is profound.

Here we should be aware of two great underlying strengths of the Dutch book industry. The first was the phenomenal infrastructure developed

during the rapid expansion of the first half of the seventeenth century; and the second, the strength of the domestic market. All of this was still largely in place for much of the eighteenth century.¹⁹ In terms of infrastructure, most important was the excellent system of internal communications, especially the canal network, which allowed books to be moved around Holland and service the wider market in the Republic; and the system of sales, especially by auction, which continued to function as a mechanism for reducing risk. Other countries adopted the auction remarkably late, with only England and Denmark developing a fully fledged system of auctions before the end of the seventeenth century. To these infrastructure foundations should be added one further development that essentially post-dated the great age of Dutch innovation before 1672: the development of a world-class paper industry.

In the years of expansion before 1672, most printing paper used in the Dutch publishing industry was imported. Traditionally, the making of paper required access to both a large quantity of rags (the raw material of paper-making until the nineteenth century) and abundant fast-flowing water to power the watermills that operated the giant hammers that crushed the rags to pulp. Heavily urbanised Holland could provide the rags, but the Dutch lowlands could offer little in the way of water power: before 1672, almost all of the domestically produced paper came from Gelderland, and most printing paper was imported from France. The critical development, in fact the most crucial technological innovation in the whole printing industry, was the adaptation of wind-power (the windmill) to power a new generation of paper mills. Most of these were located in the Zaan, the industrial district that sprang up north of Amsterdam. Visitors regarded this industrial complex as one of the wonders of the modern world. The number of paper mills grew exponentially, along with production: from 20,000 reams in the 1630s to six times this volume by the end of the century. The employment of wind-power was also linked to a second significant innovation, the Hollander beater, a metal cylinder fitted with knives, used to shred the rags. This proved more efficient than the traditional mallets, and may account for the superior fineness of Dutch papers from this period.²⁰

In the late 1660s the Republic had been importing 200,000 reams of paper from France.²¹ By the mid-eighteenth century, the Republic was a net exporter, and the heart of the European paper trade. The Zaan region did not achieve peak capacity until the 1730s. Most of Europe's paper exports now flowed through Amsterdam, a primacy it retained until the end of the century.²² This healthy paper economy was maintained by helpful

government regulation, and more informal measures taken by manufacturers to avoid damaging price competition. In 1719 the States General banned the export of rags, a ban repeated frequently up to 1769. The paper industry in fact imported large quantities of rags from elsewhere in Europe, a necessity even in this most urban of cultures if the voracious appetites of the Hollander beater were to be satisfied.

The technological revolution that spurred the production of domestic paper was, in truth, not characteristic of the Dutch book industry as a whole. In technological terms, the Dutch book world was one of the most conservative of the major Dutch industries: its contribution to the Dutch miracle was essentially in the refinement of business practice, following here the example of other high-volume industries. This complacent conservatism would prove dangerous in the long run in other parts of the book world such as France, where in the years before the Revolution many Parisian publishers were still turning out hardy bestsellers over a hundred years old. But the Dutch book trade could afford a certain complacency because virtually all the parts of the book world that had fuelled the huge growth of the seventeenth century were still performing well.

The Dutch book world of the seventeenth century was built on seven main markets: state communication, printing pamphlets and broadsheets for over 105 separate jurisdictions scattered through the seven provinces; printing for universities and illustrious schools; church books (Bibles and psalters) and devotional literature; poetry and literature; school books; small-format Latin works for the export market; and news. Together, these accounted for well over 90 per cent of the more than 360,000 editions published in the Dutch Republic before the end of the seventeenth century. Of these seven markets, only one, the university market, was in serious decline, as the burghers of the Holland towns increasingly turned their backs on a vision of a Latin education for their children, and preferred the more practical skills of the vernacular French schools. This had serious consequences for the Dutch printing industry, especially outside Holland, where publishing for public institutions – the state and city governments and the universities – was the mainstay of their business. As students dwindled in places like Harderwijk, Franeker and Groningen, it was hard for printers to sustain their businesses, and this was true more generally of the landward provinces. In truth, printing in the east of the country had never really recovered from the existential shock of 1672, when Gelderland, Overijssel and Utrecht were occupied by the invading French. In 1650, thirty-four towns in the Dutch Republic supported at least one printing

press. By 1700, this number had fallen to twenty-four.²³ The Dutch publishing industry had not necessarily declined, but it had undergone a substantial re-structuring, concentrated increasingly in the two economic powerhouses of the eighteenth century: Amsterdam and the rising power of Rotterdam. Rotterdam profited especially from the Huguenot influx, and became a leading centre of the production of French-language literature.

The decline of the universities, a Europe-wide phenomenon, also had some knock-on effect on the market for small Dutch editions of the Latin classics. These had played a major part in the export market, along with more recent Latin literature, such as the Elzevier *Republics*. This should not be exaggerated; the Latin trade was still at the heart of the scholarly market, and domestic demand remained robust: books in the classical languages remained essential to the well-appointed gentleman's library. In this respect a more potent threat was the development, from the 1670s, of a rival series of Latin classics 'in usum Delphini', for the use of the Dauphin, published in France. These crop up increasingly in auction and stock catalogues and were a considerable irritant to the Dutch, not used to being beaten at their own game.²⁴

To set against this, at least two other markets were expanding, the market for news and the market in recreational literature. This was one of the most innovative of the eighteenth-century book markets, with an increase in the writing of new drama, the birth of the novel, and the popularity of the review journal. Here the appropriation of French was key to the health of the market; the number of customers reading Dutch was too small to sustain a large number of the spectatorial magazines that had become all the rage in England and France, and many of the Dutch Spectators failed very quickly.²⁵ In fact, we should not overestimate this new literature of bourgeois letters, which seems not to have found a market commensurate with the attention it has received in the narrative of the developing literary canon. Literary texts are virtually absent, for instance, from the inventories of books in Dutch archives, through to the end of the eighteenth century.²⁶

What one does find in these inventories, as well as every other sort of book industry records, is the absolute, unshakeable preponderance of religious literature. This had been the cornerstone of the book industry from the beginning of print in the fifteenth century, and it would remain so until the end of the eighteenth century, at least. The rise of secularism, seen as a cornerstone of Enlightenment sensibility, made virtually no impact on the Dutch print industry: nor, indeed, on the reading habits of Dutch men and women.²⁷

It is a characteristic of the scholarly world that we like to study what is important to us today, rather than what contemporaries actually valued, and this is nowhere more the case than in the relative neglect of the huge quantities of religious literature published in the early modern period. And this was generally not the literature of controversy, which in terms of volume of output paled into insignificance set alongside the steady bestsellers, devotional tracts and church books, that is, editions of scripture and books of psalms and spiritual songs. On this, the surviving evidence is clear and unambiguous. Religious literature was the only class of book that appeared in all collections, from the largest libraries to the barest handful of texts in a relatively poor household.²⁸ Indeed, it is at these two extremes that the book market continued to grow into the eighteenth century, in the continued expansion of elite buying, and in the number of households that moved across the threshold of owning no books at all, to owning a mere handful. If households owned a single book, it would almost invariably be a psalm book or a New Testament. The export trade helped maintain the Latin market, and helped make reputations and fortunes for some of the book world's most distinguished figures. But it was the steady trade in religious staples, along with other hardy perennials of the industry, such as work for the local authorities and the news market, that ensured the survival of the book industry through the worst economic convulsions of the long eighteenth century.

A FAMILY BUSINESS

The population of the Dutch Republic was small, never more than 2 million, and the number of native Dutch speakers smaller still; in principle, this should have been a precariously small market for vernacular publishing. But the Dutch possessed one priceless counterbalancing advantage: very high levels of literacy. Holland, in particular, was an urban society, and it had inherited an already impressive tradition of schooling from the sixteenth-century Low Countries. Crucially, schooling extended far beyond the merchants and craftsmen who required a level of literacy for their work, encompassing also a considerable proportion of the female population. The literacy gap, between the numbers of men and women who could read, was narrow in the Dutch Republic, and would close further in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Parents invested in the education of girls by sending them to school, and later in life women often ran their own schools. The first commercial advertisement placed in a Dutch newspaper by a woman was for a school: in 1642 Magdalena Six, a resident of the small

town of Beverwijk in North Holland, advertised her services to teach young girls various handicrafts, as well as reading, writing, copying and French. For those coming from further away, there was the opportunity of boarding.²⁹ Eight years later the widow of Gillis Hendricksz van Schendel, the late schoolmaster in Abcoude, gave notice that she would continue to maintain the French school in this small village south-east of Amsterdam together with her son Willem van Schendel.³⁰

Women also took the opportunity provided by working in the family business to learn on the job, and this could also entail enquiring the rudiments of reading, writing and reckoning. How far this process had progressed during the course of the seventeenth century is evident from one particularly poignant source, a batch of letters seized by English ships *en route* to the Dutch colonies in Curaçao and Batavia. These documents eventually found their way to the English National Archives at Kew, where they can now be consulted. Most of these letters were written by women to loved ones stationed abroad. Some of these women were writing to ordinary seamen, and clearly came from a relatively low social station, but only about a quarter were obliged to avail themselves of the professional services of a



68 This bookshop was a family affair: wife and child mind the counter while a customer consults with her husband.

public letter writer. Most wrote their own letters, albeit sometimes making use of a collection of model letters to help them frame the correct salutations. Some included copies of a recent newspaper, so that their husbands could follow the news, as they clearly did. One, Jannetje Jans, told her husband that she was using the newspaper, to which the family still subscribed in his absence, to teach their daughter to read.³¹

Women clearly played an important role in the Netherlands as readers and consumers of the printed word, but evidence of this is far harder to retrieve than for men. Most of the sources so useful to us in this study offer little assistance in reconstructing the reading experience of women: there is, for instance, no single surviving auction catalogue of the library of a woman, though we can find some references to female collecting in the archival evidence, of collections where the catalogue has not survived. These meagre pickings are not altogether surprising. Women were barred from the major collecting professions (ministers, professors, lawyers, doctors and statesmen). Because they did not go to university, they could not begin collecting as students. The tendency to liquidate collections quickly after the death of a professional man militated against large collections being accumulated by widows, though there was nothing to stop them holding some things back when the collection was put on sale. But if we look beyond these rather dismal initial observations, it becomes clear that women played a very considerable role in the Dutch book industry, as readers, booksellers and publishers in their own right.

This was partly a reflection of broader trends in Dutch culture. Foreign visitors to the Netherlands frequently remarked on the unusually prominent role women played in trade. Here they were to some extent repeating conventional wisdom, stretching back to Guicciardini's famous observations on the confidence of Dutch women published in the mid-sixteenth century (and in many subsequent editions). In this particular case, however, the popular stereotype seems to have a large basis in fact. Laws of property inheritance were more favourable, and guild regulations less restrictive for women in the Dutch Republic than in other parts of Europe. Women could challenge their husband's administration of their joint estate if they felt he had mismanaged their communal goods, and they could also go to law if they felt the distribution of goods after the death of their husband was unfair.³²

One particularly interesting case arose when Franchyna Woedwaerdt, widow of the Rotterdam printer Paulus Callenbach, protested against the distribution of property after his death. This was a second marriage for Callenbach, so the rights of his daughter also had been protected, but

Franchyna had a strong and rather unusual argument. Witnesses were gathered to support her contention that she, not her husband, had been the driving force behind the business. Before their marriage, Callenbach, they attested, had been a poor man: the wealth and social connections Franchyna brought to the union had been vital to sustaining the press. Not only had she sold her trousseau to raise cash for the business, she had been ever present during the working day, 'hanging up the printed pages to dry, and proofing them, such that everything had to pass through her hands'. This testimony came from one of her husband's former journeymen, who was prepared to attest that Franchyna 'quitted herself not just ordinarily but extraordinarily, being industrious day and night in her labours'.³³

This was a relationship soured by professional disappointment. We have only been able to identify a dozen products of the Callenbach press (none of them, incidentally, in Dutch libraries), certainly not enough to sustain a decent living over two decades of fitful operation. But the fundamental picture of printing offices in which wives, and often daughters, were fully engaged in the work of the business rings true. In the Dutch Republic women were particularly active in the retail trade, often managing the shop while the husband bought stock or chased unsettled accounts; and in a society where 15 per cent of the workforce were mariners, women had plenty of experience coping with life without the directing hand of a man. About a quarter of Dutch households were headed by a woman, and this was true also of some of the most distinguished publishing enterprises of the Dutch Republic.³⁴

Susanna Veseler was already part of a prominent Amsterdam bookselling family when she married the publisher Jan Jacobsz Schipper in 1650: like many wives, she brought to the union her own valuable network of connections. After her husband's death in 1669, she not only continued the firm but developed a specialism in the publication of Bibles and church books. Working in partnership with the Jewish printer Joseph Athias, Susanna gathered an immense fortune, estimated at the time of her death to be in excess of 300,000 gulden.³⁵ In this she emulated Machteld van Wouw, widow of Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw, who not only held the office of States printer for forty years but also successfully landed the contract for the new States Bible from under the noses of the established Leiden firms. Abigail May, widow of Steven Swart, began her career publishing pamphlets in support of William III of Orange. This was the launchpad for a long career that included publication of the first edition of the great English–Dutch dictionary of William Sewel. Mercy Arnold was also an energetic pamphleteer, in this case of religious radicalism.

All of these women were well prepared for the moment they stepped out from the shadow of their husband to run an independent business, often with great distinction and over a long course of years. Nowhere was this more the case than with Margaretha van Bancken, who continued after the death of the Haarlem printer Abraham Casteleyn to run their newspaper, the *Oprechte Haerlemse Courant*, by now the most successful paper in the Dutch Republic. She was also appointed city printer as his successor. When in 1692 the Haarlem magistrates announced their intention to raise the taxes on printed news, Margaretha threatened to close the newspaper altogether – lo and behold, the magistrates gave way. Women seem, indeed, to have been particularly active in the newspaper trade. We can enumerate at least ten female newspaper publishers in the Dutch Republic, with a further nine in the much smaller newspaper market of the Southern Netherlands.³⁶

These were on the whole, tough, experienced business women, prepared to strike a hard bargain, and not above a little rough practice to outmanoeuvre a rival. But they also brought a particular sensibility to the trade, not least the particular needs of female readers. It is no wonder that Susanna Veseler reorientated her business so sharply to the trade in Bibles, for this was an area in which female consumers were particularly active. For in the same way that many shops and business practices were run as a partnership, so too was the household. Dutch women, even in prosperous burgher households, were expected to play an active role in the education and upbringing of their children. Much of this education took place in the informal context of the home. So while engravings offer a stylised vision of the patriarch of the family with open Bible, sitting at the head of the table, there was also room for soft power. Mothers understood the power of bedtime, and it was there that the piety and values of Dutch society were first inculcated.

LIFE ON NOVA ZEMBLA

The Dutch were never a monoglot people. In the sixteenth-century Low Countries, the seventeen provinces of the Burgundian inheritance, Dutch was the language of no more than a bare majority. The Walloon provinces of the south spoke French, as did the higher nobility: French was also the language of the court. In the north, Friesland spoke its own distinct tongue, and the eastern provinces contributed a variety of Low German dialects. In the seventeenth century the new state was reshaped by an enormous movement of peoples, most obviously French- and Dutch-speaking Netherlanders who moved north from the provinces reconquered by Spain, but also



69 Bed time. The presence of the book is unusual, and probably symbolic, since most lullabies would be sung from memory.

considerable numbers of migrant workers from Germany, and later the Huguenot refugees from France.³⁷

This degree of population movement would be challenging for most societies, but the Dutch tended to see the opportunities. The French and German influxes were easily absorbed, and, indeed, played a major role in the Dutch economic miracle. So too did immigrants from the Southern Netherlands, though they were a more turbulent presence, and a material force in the great political controversies of the first two decades of the seventeenth century. The book industry also played its part in facilitating integration. Publishers developed a substantial French-language output, both for the domestic market and for export, and turned out a significant number of publications in German. These German texts were largely the preserve of a small number of specialists, and this was also true of booksellers dealing in

English-language texts, for which there was surprisingly strong demand in the Netherlands. Cross-channel connections were also extremely useful when it came to rendering into Dutch the English works that were such a significant presence in the market for devotional literature. All told, this foreign-language trade, and translations from other languages into Dutch, made up a substantial component of the domestic book production.

This was all good work for the book industry, but the true reflection of this polyglot nation can also be found in the extraordinary number of bilingual, trilingual and multilingual texts published in the Dutch Republic. In the course of the seventeenth century, Dutch publishers put out books in at least eighty-five different language combinations.³⁸ This extraordinary linguistic virtuosity has not been much remarked on by students of the Golden Age, but it represents one of the great unsung achievements of Dutch scholarship. A large number of these works were for the school, university and scholarly market. Greek/Latin texts were a staple of the scholarly world and, during the course of the seventeenth century, Dutch scholars embarked on an extraordinarily ambitious programme to unlock the treasures of the ancient languages. Here, the decision by the University of Leiden to buy the famous Erpenius typefaces was critical, perpetuating a publishing programme that had already made a considerable contribution to Leiden's growing reputation as a centre of Oriental studies – a reputation it still retains. Leiden editions, with texts incorporating Arabic, Chaldean, Syriac and Hebrew fonts, made their way into collections all over Europe. It is no exaggeration to say that these works, along with Dutch cartography, played a critical role in establishing the reputation Dutch publishers enjoyed for exceptional quality: a reputation that helped sell the small-format classical editions with which the Dutch then bombarded the European market.

The scholarly polyglot editions were destined for a refined audience dispersed around Europe, but Dutch firms also published a large number of multilingual texts tailored for a domestic audience. The large number of Dutch/French editions is scarcely surprising given the nature of the population, and there was much, much more. All told, Dutch can be found with other languages in no fewer than twenty-six combinations. Dictionaries were an important tool for a trading nation, though those trying to gain a practical command of a foreign language tended to turn to other forms of primers. Bilingual versions of the New Testament, or of the Book of Psalms, were popular in this context. The fitful yet dogged attempt to engage with colonial peoples is reflected in the publication of a range of books in Dutch and Malay, the tongues of Brazil and what is referred to as 'Madagaskar'.

In 1871, a ship travelling the sub-Arctic waters of northern Russia rediscovered the abandoned refuge of the Willem Barentsz expedition which was stranded on Nova Zembla in 1596. The house was packed with the possessions and supplies that could not be fitted on the small vessel on which the surviving crew made their escape; thanks to the intense cold, many of these artefacts were still largely intact. Among them were the remnants of sixteen books (they are now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam). With these books, the trapped crew had whiled away the winter nights, illuminated by artfully constructed lamps powered by animal fat. The small collection contained navigational texts and accounts of earlier voyages. There were two Catholic texts, reflecting the multi-confessional nature of any ship's crew, and a Dutch–French dictionary. A fragment of an almanac for the year 1597 has also been identified (a previously unknown edition).³⁹ The fact that there was no Bible and no psalm books suggests that these were considered indispensable to invoke the help of the Almighty on their way back home; we know they were included in the equipment of every ship that left the Dutch Republic.

Brazil and Batavia, Copenhagen and Danzig, Paris, London and upstate New York – and now Nova Zembla: we have followed Dutch books into every known and newly discovered corner of the world. Doubtless we would find some in the Cape Colony in Southern Africa too, for we know from a



70 A fragment of a Dutch–French dictionary rescued from the *Behouden Huys* on Nova Zembla.

surviving ordinance of the VOC, a broadsheet reminding employees it was forbidden to purloin company property, that it was required to be exhibited at the Cape trading station. Indeed, the company sent a considerable stock, so that if the copy was ripped or blown down, it could immediately be replaced.⁴⁰ As they made their way out to sea, the great ships of the VOC leaving Holland would have passed the sandy island of Texel, where a few hardy souls eked out a living through fishing and salvage. Yet even communities like this, it seems, had their church, their minister and their printing press. This we know from an advertisement in an Amsterdam paper promoting two books written by the local Texel minister in 1666 and published in the little town of Den Burg, coincidentally in the exact same week as the English fleet descended on the island of Terschelling to burn their equally small settlement. Even in these troubled times, yet another minister turned to his local press to consecrate their service to God in print.⁴¹

In the course of this book we have poked our noses into some of the greatest libraries of the century, and impressive these libraries certainly were. But perhaps, after all, the real story of the Dutch book world lies in its ubiquity: books in shops, read on canal barges, handed out to guests at weddings and student graduations, festering in the stifling damp of the East Indies, carefully unloaded from Grotius's book chest so that the statesman could be hidden inside. We may admire the great writers, and the great collectors, and thank them for the careful stewardship of books that now fill the shelves of the world's largest libraries, and we have met plenty of them here. But the most critical development of the Dutch century was the number of its citizens who owned some books for the first time: books that encapsulated their hopes for the future, their love for their families, and the strength of their faith in God.

For these new customers, the Dutch book industry developed a subtly measured range of books in all formats and price ranges, anticipating the explosion of cheap print that heralded the democratic age of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Much of this literature was too ephemeral, or too heavily used, to survive, and we have done our best to reconstruct this lost world of cheap books in this text. In its own age, it was a critical part of an engagement with print, which in the Dutch Golden Age reached new heights of sophistication and diversity, all marketed with the clear-eyed genius of this most commercial people. If every age gets the books it deserves, it was never more the case than when Rembrandt was rummaging around the street stalls of Amsterdam, looking for drapes, clothing and other props; and where so many of his fellow citizens bought books.

Timeline

Italicised sentences refer to events in the book world.

1566	Outbreak of iconoclasm in the Habsburg Low Countries
1572	Revolt of Holland
1575	<i>University of Leiden established</i>
1576	Sack of Antwerp. <i>Christophe Plantin's Antwerp printshop ransomed three times</i>
1578	Amsterdam joins the revolt. <i>Cornelis Claesz establishes shop in Amsterdam</i>
1580	<i>Louis Elzevier arrives in Leiden</i>
1581	Act of Abjuration, rebel provinces reject authority of Philip II
1585	Fall of Antwerp. <i>Franeker University established</i>
1588–1597	Successive military conquests secure Dutch borders
1597	First successful return of a Dutch East Indies fleet
1599	<i>First book auction with printed catalogue</i>
1602	Foundation of Dutch East India Company (VOC)
1604	<i>First publication of Willem Bartjens' Cijfferinghe</i>
1605	<i>Publication of first catalogue of Oxford's Bodleian Library</i>
1607	<i>Professor Daniel Heinsius appointed librarian of the University of Leiden</i>
1609–1621	Twelve Years' Truce
1613–1624	<i>Thomas Erpenius active in Leiden, responsible for exquisite Oriental typefaces</i>
1614	<i>Groningen University established</i>
1618–1619	Synod of Dordt
1618–1625	Voyages of Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe
1618	<i>First publication of weekly newspapers</i>
1619	Execution of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt. Foundation of Batavia (modern Jakarta)

TIMELINE

- 1621 Foundation of Dutch West India Company (WIC). *First edition of Gellius de Bouma's bestselling commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism. First newspaper advertisements*
- 1623 Execution of English traders on Amboina
- 1625 Death of Prince Maurice of Orange, succeeded by half-brother Frederick Henry. Spanish capture Breda
- 1625–1641 *Publication of the Elzevier Republics*
- 1627–1633 *Rembrandt obtains thirteen commissions from the court of Frederick Henry*
- 1628 Piet Heyn takes the Spanish Silver Fleet
- 1631 *Rembrandt moves to Amsterdam*
- 1632 *Foundation of Illustrious School at Amsterdam*
- 1635 *Johannes Janssonius opens Copenhagen branch office*
- 1636 *Utrecht University established*
- 1637 Dutch recapture of Breda. *Publication of States Bible. Tulipmania*
- 1638 *The Elzeviers publish Galileo's Two New Sciences. Amsterdam's Schouwburg theatre opens with performance of Vondel's Gijsbrecht van Aemstel*
- 1639 Battle of the Downs seals Dutch naval hegemony
- 1646 *First publication of Bontekoe's travel journal*
- 1647 Death of Prince Frederick Henry, succeeded by son William II
- 1648 Peace of Westphalia, end of Eighty Years' War and Thirty Years' War. *Harderwijk University established*
- 1649 Dutch lose Second Battle of Guararapes, effectively dooming Dutch Brazil
- 1650 William II's siege of Amsterdam. William dies in November
- 1651–1672 True Freedom regime in Holland
- 1652–1654 First Anglo-Dutch War
- 1653 Johan de Witt appointed Grand Pensionary of Holland
- 1656 *First edition of Oprechte Haerlemse Courant. Socinian Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum published in Amsterdam*
- 1662–1672 *Publication of Joan Blaeu's Atlas Maior*
- 1663 Prayer form controversy in Holland
- 1664 English troops occupy New Netherland, New Amsterdam renamed New York
- 1665 *Stock of Johannes Janssonius's bookshop, 22,474 titles, sold at auction*
- 1665–1667 Second Anglo-Dutch War

TIMELINE

- 1667 Perpetual Edict of the States of Holland, position of Stadhouder abolished
- 1669 *Death of Rembrandt*
- 1672 Disaster Year, invasion of the Dutch Republic, murder of Johan and Cornelis de Witt, William III appointed Stadhouder
- 1672–1674 Third Anglo-Dutch War
- 1672–1678 Franco-Dutch War
- 1674 *Daniel Elzevier issues his great stock catalogue of 18,247 titles*
- 1681 *Death of Daniel Elzevier*
- 1688 Dutch invasion of England. *Auction of the collection of Professor Jacques Oisel in Groningen with 11,618 lots*
- 1688–1697 Nine Years' War
- 1689 William III and Mary crowned King and Queen of England and Scotland
- 1695–1696 At least twenty-four municipal lotteries take place in the Dutch Republic
- 1701–1713 War of the Spanish Succession
- 1702 Death of William III
- 1712 *Death of Abraham Elzevier*
- 1713 Peace of Utrecht ends war with France

Endnotes

Prelude: Making Room for Books

1. Amy Golahny, *Rembrandt's Reading: The Artist's Bookshelf of Ancient Poetry and History* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2003).
2. See, for instance, Jerry Brotton, *The Sale of the Late King's Goods: Charles I and His Art Collection* (2nd edn, London: Pan, 2017). The collecting of the English connoisseurs was focused almost entirely on the Italian masters, with the significant exceptions of Rubens and Van Dyck.
3. Voltaire, *Oeuvres complètes, tome cinquante-huitième* (Basel: Jean-Jaques Tourneisen, 1788), p. 20.
4. Henk van Nierop, 'Confessional cleansing: why Amsterdam did not join the revolt (1572–1578)', in Wayne te Brake and Wim Klooster (eds), *Power and the City in the Netherlandic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 85–102.
5. 1662–1663; 1669–1671; 1680–1687; 1698–1700.
6. See Chapters 2 and 13, below.
7. Reinier Cornelis Bakhuizen van den Brink, cited in Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, 'Willem Jansz Blaeu and the voyage of Le Maire and Schouten', *Quaerendo*, 3 (1973), pp. 87–105, here p. 87.
8. David W. Davies, *The World of the Elzeviers, 1580–1712* (Leiden: Nijhoff, 1954), p. 150.
9. Franciscus Ridderus, *Nuttige Tiidkorter voor reizende en andere luden* (Rotterdam: Joannes Naeranus, 1663), p. 66.
10. Arthur der Weduwen, 'Fear and loathing in Weesp: personal and political networks in the Dutch print world', in Graeme Kemp and Alexander Wilkinson (eds), *Negotiating Conflict and Controversy in the Early Modern Book World* (Leiden: Brill, 2019). See also Chapter 15, below.
11. Quoted in Jonathan I. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 999.
12. <https://www.kb.nl/en/organisation/research-expertise/for-libraries/short-title-catalogue-netherlands-stcn>.
13. See below, Chapter 3.
14. Arthur der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers of the Seventeenth Century, 1618–1700* (2 vols, Leiden: Brill, 2017).
15. See below, Chapter 8. Andrew Pettegree (ed.), *Broadsheets: Single-sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
16. All of this newly discovered material can be accessed in the Universal Short Title Catalogue (USTC), hosted by the University of St Andrews: <http://www.ustc.ac.uk/>.
17. Pettegree (ed.), *Broadsheets: Single-sheet Publishing in the First Age of Print*.
18. Flavia Bruni and Andrew Pettegree (eds), *Lost Books: Reconstructing the Print World of Pre-industrial Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016).
19. Andrew Pettegree and Arthur der Weduwen, 'What was published in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic?', *Livre. Revue Historique*, 1 (2018), pp. 1–22.
20. See Chapter 4, below.
21. See Chapter 9, below.

22. See Chapter 11, below.
23. Anthony Smyters, *Epitheta* (Rotterdam: Jan van Waesberghe, 1620). Bert van Selm, *De Amadis van Gaule-romans: productie, verspreiding en receptie van een bestseller in de vroegmoderne tijd in de Nederlanden* (Leiden: SNL, 2001), p. 63.
24. Pettegree and Der Weduwen, 'What was published in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic?'
25. In common with all students of book history, we use the term 'book' for any item printed with moveable type, irrespective of whether this is a broadsheet, a small pamphlet or a large volume.

1 Beginnings

1. For spectacle-sellers at the Frankfurt Fair, and their sales patter, see James Westphal Thompson (ed.), *The Frankfort Book Fair: The Francofordiense Emporium of Henri Estienne* (Chicago, IL: Burt Franklin, 1911), p. 58.
2. Elizabeth Eisenstein, *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of an Ending* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).
3. These developments are laid out in Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (London: Yale University Press, 2010).
4. Guido Marnef, 'From prosecuted minority to dominance: the changing face of the Calvinist Church in the cities of Flanders and Brabant (1577–1585)', in Herman Seldenhuis and Marius J. Lange van Ravenswaay (eds), *Reformed Majorities in Early Modern Europe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), pp. 227–244.
5. Gustaaf Asaert, 1585: *De val van Antwerpen en de uittocht van Vlamingen en Brabanders* (Tielt: Lannoo, 2004), p. 135.
6. Maarten Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: The Golden Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 141.
7. J.G.C.A. Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekdrukkers en boekverkopers in de Republiek der Verenigde Nederlanden omstreeks 1570–1630* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1974).
8. Below, Chapter 5.
9. Below, Chapter 8.
10. *Catalogus librorum bibliothecae D. Philippi Marnixii Sancto-Aldegondij* (Leiden: Christoffel Guyot, 1599), USTC 429893. Bert van Selm, *Een menighe treffelijcke boecken: Nederlandse boekhandelscatalogi in het begin van de zeventiende eeuw* (Utrecht: HES, 1987).
11. Ian Maclean, 'Murder, debt and retribution in the Italo-Franco-Spanish book trade: the Beraud-Michel-Ruiz Affair, 1586–1591', in his *Learning and the Market Place: Essays in the History of the Early Modern Book* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 227–272.
12. Comparing the data in the STCN with Book Sales Catalogues Online, <http://primary.sources.brillonline.com/browse/book-sales-catalogues-online>.
13. *Dictionario coloquios o dialogos en quatro lenguas, flamenco, frances, español y italiano* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1580), USTC 83856. This was a popular work by Noël van Berlaumont first published in Antwerp in 1568.
14. Chapter 3, below.
15. Van Selm, *Een menighe treffelijcke boecken*, p. 179.
16. Out of total sales worth 3,219 gulden, Claesz bought books worth 1,651 gulden. Van Selm, *Een menighe treffelijcke boecken*, p. 183.
17. *Ibid.*, pp. 174–283.
18. *Const ende caert-register* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1609).
19. Below, Chapters 2 and 5.
20. Paul Dijstelberge, 'De cost en de baet: Uitgeven en drukken in Amsterdam rond 1600', in J.W.J. Burgers et al. (eds), *Holland*, 26 (1994), pp. 217–234.
21. Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, 'Willem Jansz Blaeu as a publisher of books', *Quaerendo*, 3 (1973), pp. 141–146, here p. 142.

2 A Poisonous Peace

1. Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, *Remonstrantie aende hooghe ende moghende heeren Staten van de landen van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt* (Den Haag: Hillebrant Jacobsz van Wouw, 1618), p. 79.
2. P.A.M. Geurts, *De Nederlandse opstand in de pamfletten 1566–1584* (Utrecht: HES uitgevers, 1983). Alistair Duke, *Dissident Identities in the Early Modern Low Countries*, ed. Judith Pollmann and Andrew Spicer (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).
3. Craig Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987). Monica Stensland, 'Peace or no peace? The role of pamphleteering in public debate in the run-up to the Twelve Year Truce', in Femke Deen, David Onnekink and Michel Reinders (eds), *Pamphlets and Politics in the Dutch Republic* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 227–252.
4. Ingrid Weekhout, *Boekencensuur in de Noordelijke Nederlanden: De vrijheid van drukpers in de zeventiende eeuw* (Den Haag: Sdu uitgevers, 1998).
5. *Provisionele Openinghe van verscheyden saecken, ghestelt in de remonstrantie van den heer advocaat van Hollandt en West-Vrieslant* (S.l., s.n., 1618), p. 3.
6. Cornelis van der Mijle, *Vertoogh aende hooge mogende heeren die Staten Generael* (Den Haag: Hillebrant van Wouw, 1618), p. 3.
7. *Den vraegh-al, in-houdende ettelijcke questien ofte vraghen* (S.l., s.n., 1618), f. A2r.
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9. Cited in Jan den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt, II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), pp. 615–616.
10. A.Th. van Deursen, *Bavianen en Slijkgeuzen: Kerk en kerkvolk ten tijde van Maurits en Oldebarnevelt* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1974). Freya Sierhuis, *The Literature of the Arminian Controversy: Religion, Politics, and the Stage in the Dutch Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).
11. See Chapter 4, below.
12. Marianne Roobol, *Disputation by Decree: The Public Disputations between Reformed Ministers and Dirck Volckertszoon Coornhert as Instruments of Religious Policy during the Dutch Revolt (1577–1583)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).
13. Sierhuis, *Literature of the Arminian Controversy*, p. 22.
14. Keith D. Stanglin, 'Johannes Kuchlinus, the "Faithful Teacher": his role in the Arminian Controversy and his impact as a theological interpreter and educator', *Church History and Religious Culture*, 87 (2007), pp. 305–326.
15. Jacob Trigland, *Verdediging vande leere ende eere der gereformeerde kercken* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz Brandt, 1616), f. ()3r.
16. H. Pagius, *Clare Aenwysinghe vande gelegentheyte van Vincent van Drielenborgh* (Leiden: Govert Basson, 1616), p. 1. See also Roeland Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie: Massamedia in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2011), p. 33.
17. *Wtkomste ende verthooninghe van den Utrechtschen martelaer Johannes Wtenbogaert* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz Brandt, 1616). On Van Drielenburch as author see Roeland Harms, "'By Vincent van Drielenburch, member of God's Church': the author-function in pamphlets during the Truce conflicts (1609–1621)", *Quaerendo*, 43 (2013), pp. 25–60.
18. Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, p. 67.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 48–55.
20. Jacobus Taurinus, *Van-de onderlinge verdraagsaamheyt, die soo wel predicanten als gemeyne lidt-maten behooren te onder-houden* (Utrecht: Jan Everdsen van Doorn, 1616), f. A6r. See also Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, p. 58.
21. Andrew Pettegree, *Brand Luther: 1517, Printing and the Making of the Reformation* (New York: Penguin, 2015).
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24. Willem Baudartius, *Morghen-wecker der vrye Nederlantsche provintien* (Danswick: Crijn Vermeulen de Jonge [=Franeker: Rombertus Doyema], 1610).
25. *Ibid.*, ff. C4r and D3v.
26. *Ibid.*, f. D3v.
27. For example, *Waerachtigh ende cort verhael vande groote ambitie ende wreede tyrannye des conings van Hispaengien, Philips den tweeden* ([Delft: Jan Andriesz Cloeting], 1608).
28. K.W. Swart, 'The Black Legend during the Eighty Years War', in J.S. Bromley and E.H. Kossmann (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands, V: Some Political Mythologies* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 36–57.
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30. *Placcaet van borghemeesteren ende raet der stadt Aken. Ghepubliceert den 9. septembris 1614. waerin alle predicanten ooc alle wederdoopers de stadt verboden wordt* (Amsterdam: Abraham Leenaerts, 1614).
31. See USTC 1001822; 1010509; 1018446; 1021462; 1021504; 1506717.
32. Helmer Helmers, 'Cartography, war correspondence and news publishing: the early career of Nicolaes van Geelkercken, 1610–1630', in Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (eds), *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 350–374, here p. 359.
33. *Tot lof zynder Prinslycke[n] eer diens deughd fama doet blycke[n] zeer* (Leiden: Nicolaas van Geelkercken, [1612]).
34. *Afbeeldinge ende cort vertooch vanden seltsamen oorloch, die nu ten tijden int lant van Gulick, Cleef, etc. ghevoert wort* ([Leiden: Nicolaas van Geelkercken, 1615]). Helmers, 'Cartography, war correspondence and news publishing.'
35. For some examples see USTC 1033895; 1032216; 1020255; 1033634.
36. *Spaenschen raedt, hoemen de vereenichde Nederlanden alderbest wederom sal kunnen brengen onder t'gebiedt van den Coninc van Spagnien* (S.l., s.n., 1617), especially pp. 7–10, here p. 8.
37. On Aert Meuris see also Ad Leerintveld, 'Politiek, religie en literatuur. Het fonds van de Haagse drukker Aert van Meurs en de familie Huygens', *De zeventiende eeuw*, 8 (1992), pp. 139–147. Dijstelberge, *De beer is los!*, pp. 115–122.
38. On Jan Claesz van Dorp see Erfgoed Leiden, archief 0508, inv. 30a; see also J.A. Jacobs, 'Jan Claesz van Dorp en enkele door hem in 1618 gedrukte pamfletten', in J.W. Marsilje et al. (eds), *Uit Leidse bron geleverd* (Leiden: Gemeentearchief Leiden, 1989), pp. 285–288, and Theo Bögels, 'The City of Leiden v. Jan Claesz van Dorp, bookseller', in Susan Roach (ed.), *Across the Narrow Seas. Studies in the History and Bibliography of Britain and the Low Countries* (London: British Library, 1991).
39. *Justificatie vande cours die ghehouden wort by de steden, Dordrecht, Amstelredam, Schiedam, Enchuysen, Edam ende Purmerynde tot bewaringe vande wettige regieringe der landen* (Amsterdam: Marten Jansz Brandt, 1618).
40. See Chapter 10, below.
41. A.Th. van Deursen, *Maurits van Nassau, 1567–1625: De winnaar die faalde* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2000).
42. Joke Spaans, 'Imagining the Synod of Dordt and the Arminian Controversy', in Aza Goudriaan and Fred van Lieburg (eds), *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt (1618–1619)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). Maureen Warren, *Politics, Punishment and Prestige: Images of Johan van Oldenbarnevelt and the States Party in the Dutch Republic, 1618–1672* (PhD thesis, Northwestern University, 2015).
43. *Den Arminiaenschen dreck-waghen* (S.l., s.n., 1618).
44. *Verclaringhe van den gouden blaes-balck, van den Spaenschen schalck* (S.l., s.n., 1618).

45. *Gulden Legende van den Nieuwen St Jan* (S.l., s.n., 1618), p. 8. See also Sierhuis, *Literature of the Arminian Controversy*, p. 153.
46. Den Tex, *Oldenbarnevelt*, II, p. 653.
47. See Chapters 3 and 10, below.
48. Marika Koblusek, *Boeken in de Hofstad. Haagse boekcultuur in de Gouden Eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997), pp. 32–33.
49. *Resolutie by de hooghe mog. Heeren Staten Generael ghenomen jehens eenighe gheciteerde Remonstranten* (Den Haag: Hillebrant van Wouw, 1619).
50. Sierhuis, *Literature of the Arminian Controversy*, p. 161.
51. Dijkstra, *De beer is los!*, p. 120.
52. M.M. Kleerkooper and W.P. van Stockum Jr, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam voornamelijk in de 17e eeuw: Biographische en geschiedkundige aantekeningen* (2 vols, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1914–1916), pp. 869–878. See also Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, pp. 83–84.
53. *Catalogus variorum & insignium librorum, praesertim medicorum* (Leiden: Elzeviriana, 1628), pp. 6–7.

3 News Cycles

1. A discovery made in the departure lounge of Schiphol airport on 11 June 2016: the wonders of digital resources. Surviving copies of the first issue (USTC N2-2) are to be found in the University Library of Amsterdam, the University Library of Leiden and the Museum Kennemerland in Beverwijk, and of the second (USTC N2-3) in the Royal Library in The Hague.
2. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 15, 265.
3. Jan de Vries, *Barges and Capitalism: Passenger Transportation in the Dutch Economy (1632–1839)* (Utrecht: H&S, 1981).
4. Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News* (London: Yale University Press, 2014).
5. Johannes Weber, 'Strassburg 1605: the origins of the newspaper in Europe', *German History*, 24 (2006), pp. 387–412.
6. Pieter Cornelisz Hooft to Joost Baak, 25 August 1631, letter 474, in W. van Tricht et al. (eds), *De briefwisseling van Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft*, II (Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink/Noorduijn, 1977), p. 233.
7. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 315–325, 418–422.
8. On Verhoeven see now Andrew Pettegree, 'Tabloid values: on the trail of Europe's first news hound', in Richard Kirwan and Sophie Mullins (eds), *Specialist Markets in the Early Modern Book World* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), pp. 17–34, and Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 48–55, 57–58, 326–332, 426–427, 443–444.
9. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 326–417.
10. Pettegree, *Invention of News*, p. 358.
11. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 426–438.
12. *Den grooten barbiere winkel* (S.l., s.n., 1639). See Chapter 10, below, and also Arthur der Weduwen, 'The Battle of the Downs: reporting victory and defeat in the early periodical press', *Media History*, 24 (2018), pp. 1–25, and H. Borst, 'Van Hilten, Broersz. en Claessen: Handel in boeken en actueel drukwerk tussen Amsterdam en Leeuwarden rond 1639', *De zeventiende eeuw*, 8 (1992), pp. 131–138.
13. Paul Begheyn, *Abraham Leyniers: Een Nijmeegse boekverkoper uit de zeventiende eeuw, met een uitgave van zijn correspondentie uit de jaren 1634–1644* (Nijmegen: Nijmeegs Museum Commanderie van Sint Jan, 1992), p. 30.
14. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, p. 144.
15. David Beck, *Spiegel van mijn leven; een Haags dagboek uit 1624*, ed. Sv.E. Veldhuijzen (Hilversum: Verloren, 1993). See also Jeroen Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life: Reading and Writing in Early Modern Dutch Diaries* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 41–111.
16. David Beck, *Mijn voornaamste daden en ontmoetingen. Dagboek van David Beck, Arnhem 1627–1628*, ed. Jeroen Blaak (Hilversum: Verloren, 2014).

17. Beck, *Spiegel van mijn leven*, pp. 158–159, 207–208.
18. Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life*, pp. 49, 55.
19. Beck, *Spiegel van mijn leven*, p. 141.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 50, 288–291.
21. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, p. 84.
22. As detailed in *ibid.*
23. Arthur der Weduwen and Andrew Pettegree, *News, Business and the Birth of Modern Advertising: Advertisements and Public Announcements in Dutch and Flemish Newspapers, 1620–1675* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).
24. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, p. 679.
25. See Chapter 6, below.
26. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 42, 17 October 1643, and *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 46, 14 November 1643.
27. Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, p. 78.
28. *Haegsche Weekelycke Mercurius*. 23. s.d. (1658).
29. *Haegsche Weekelycke Mercurius*. 37a. 22 October 1657.
30. Pettegree, *Invention of News*, pp. 88–94.
31. See for example *Courante uyt Italien ende Duytslant, &c.* 14. 2 June 1661, with an announcement concerning a thirty-year-old man who fell off the barge from Zwolle to Amsterdam.
32. Examples in Der Weduwen, *Dutch and Flemish Newspapers*, pp. 27–32, 34, 37–40, 44, 46–47, 51, 56, 59–60, 67, 85–86.
33. *Warschouwinge, bailliu, burgemeesters, schepenen, ende raden der stadt Vlissingen, hebben geordonneert, dat yder persoon hem sal hebben te voorsien van behoorlijck geweer* (Vlissingen: Abraham van Laren, 1671).
34. See Chapters 12 and 13, below. Michel Reinders, *Printed Pandemonium. Popular Print and Politics in the Netherlands, 1650–1672* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

4 To the Ends of the Earth

1. Lodewijk Petram, *The World's First Stock Exchange* (New York: Columbia Business School, 2014).
2. *Verhael vande reyse by de Hollandtsche schepen gedaen naer Oost Indien, met de beschryvinghe der landen daer zy gheweest zijn* (Middelburg: Barent Langenes, 1597).
3. Vibeke D. Roeper and G.J. Diederick Wildeman, *Reizen op papier: Journalen en reisverslagen van Nederlandse ontdekkingsreizigers, kooplieden en avonturiers* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 1996).
4. Joris van Spilbergen, *Journael van de voyagie gedaen met ses scheepen, door de Straet Magalanes* (Amsterdam: Gillis Joosten Saeghman, [1663]), p. 25.
5. Charles McKew Parr, *Jan van Linschoten: The Dutch Marco Polo* (New York: Crowell, 1964).
6. Oliver Impey and Arthur MacGregor (eds), *The Origins of Museums: The Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).
7. Gerrit de Veer, *Waerachtighe beschryvinghe van drie seylagien, ter werelt noyt soo vreemt ghehoort* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1598).
8. Johannes Pontanus, *Historische Beschrijvinghe der seer wijt beroemde coop-stadt Amsterdam*, trans. Petrus Montanus (Amsterdam: Jodocus Hondius, 1614).
9. Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, *Voyagie, ofte schip-vaert, van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, van by noorden om langes Noorwegen tot voorby de revier Oby. Anno 1594. ende 1595* (Franeker: Gerard Ketel voor Jan Huyghen van Linschoten, 1601).
10. *Catalogus librorum bibliothecae illust. viri Josephi Scaligeri* (Leiden: Thomas Basson, 1609). See also Chapter 7, below.
11. *Catalogus variorum librorum viri Do. Balthasar Bekker* (Amsterdam: Daniel van Dalen and Andries van Damme [1698]).

12. Franciscus Ridderus, *Nuttige Tiidkorter voor reizende en andere luiden* (Rotterdam: Joannes Naeranus, 1663), f. 4*3r.
13. For some examples, see lots 42–78 in the historical quartos in *Bibliotheca Oizeliana* (Leiden: Jacobus Hackius, 1687), pp. 119–122, or lots 238–240 in the historical quartos in *Bibliotheca Goesiana* (Leiden: Johannes du Viví, 1687), p. 32.
14. *Catalogus van uytstekende raare boeken nagelaten by wylen Cornelis Le Blon* (Amsterdam: Albert Magnus, [1688]), pp. 16–21.
15. Fontaine Verwey, ‘Willem Jansz Blaeu and the voyage of Le Maire and Schouten’.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
17. Joris van Spilbergen, *Oost- ende West-Indische Spiegel der nieuwe navigatien* (Leiden: Nicolaas van Geelkercken, 1619).
18. J.G. Smit (ed.), *Resolutiën der Staten Generaal, nieuwe reeks, 1610–1670* (vol. 4, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1981), 29 April 1619, p. 111.
19. C.A. Davids, ‘Ondernemers in kennis: Het zeevaartkundig onderwijs in de Republiek gedurende de zeventiende eeuw’, *De zeventiende eeuw*, 7 (1991), pp. 37–46. Margaret Spufford, ‘Literacy, trade and religion in the commercial centres of Europe’, in Karel Davids and Jan Lucassen (eds), *A Miracle Mirrored: The Dutch Republic in European Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 229–283, here pp. 255–256.
20. Günter Schilder, *Early Dutch Maritime Cartography: The North Holland School of Cartography (c. 1580–c. 1620)* (Leiden: Brill, 2017).
21. U.E.E. Vroom et al., *Lucas Jansz. Waghenae van Enckhuysen: De maritime cartografie in de Nederlanden in de zestiende en het begin van de zeventiende eeuw* (Enkhuizen: Vereniging ‘Vrienden van het Zuiderzeemuseum’, 1984).
22. *Const ende caert-register* (Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1609).
23. *Ibid.*, f. B3r.
24. *Catalogi cujuscunque facultatis & linguae librorum, abhinc 2 a 3 annorum impressorum* (3rd instalment, Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius van Waesberghe, 1677), pp. 36–37.
25. See most recently Djoek van Netten, *Koopman in kennis: De uitgever Willem Jansz Blaeu in de geleerde wereld (1571–1638)* (Zutphen: De Walburg Pers, 2014). On globemaking: Peter van der Krogt, *Globi Neerlandici: The Production of Globes in the Low Countries* (Utrecht: HES, 1993).
26. Djoek van Netten, ‘Een boek als carrièrevehikel: De zeemansgidsen van Blaeu’, *De zeventiende eeuw*, 27 (2011), pp. 214–231.
27. Fontaine Verwey, ‘Willem Jansz Blaeu as a publisher of books’, p. 142.
28. See Chapter 13, below.
29. Kees Zandvliet, *Mapping for Money: Maps, Plans, and Topographical Paintings and Their Role in Dutch Overseas Expansion during the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Amsterdam: Batavian Lion International, 2002).
30. Michiel van Groesen, *Amsterdam’s Atlantic: Print Culture and the Making of Dutch Brazil* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017). See also Chapter 10, below.
31. The first edition is Johannes de Laet, *Nieuwe wereldt ofte Beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (Leiden: Isaac Elzevier, 1625).
32. *Catalogus Librorum* (Amsterdam: Johannes van Ravesteyn, 1656), p. 11.
33. See for example advertisements in the *Haerlemse Courant* of 19 November 1658, 23 November 1658, 26 November 1658 and 15 March 1659.
34. Garrelt Verhoeven and P.J. Verkruijsse (eds), *Journal ofte gedenckwaerdige beschrijvinghe vande Oost-Indische reyse van Willem Ysbrantsz. Bontekoe van Hoorn: descriptieve bibliografie 1646–1996* (Zutphen: Walburg, 1996). Karel Bostoen et al. (eds), *Bontekoe: De schipper, het journaal, de scheepjongens* (Amsterdam/Zutphen: Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum/Walburg Pers, 1996).
35. Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, *Journal ofte gedenckwaerdige beschrijvinghe van de Oost-Indische reyse* (Hoorn: Jan Jansz Deutel, 1646), f. *2v.
36. *Ibid.*, f. *3r.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
38. *Ibid.*, pp. 18–19.

39. See Chapter 9, below.
40. Willem Ysbrantsz Bontekoe, *Journael ofte Gedenckwaerdighe Beschrijvinghe vande Oost-Indische Reyse* (Hoorn: Jan Jansz Deutel, 1648), f. *4v.
41. *Oprechte Haerlemse Saterdagse Courant*. 21. 24 May 1664.
42. *Den vermeerderden spiegel der Spaensche tierannije geschiet in Westindien* (Amsterdam: Gillis Joosten Saeghman, [1663]).
43. Garrelt Verhoeven, 'De reisuittgaven van Gillis Joosten Saeghman: "En koopt er geen dan met dees fraaie Faem"', *Literatuur*, 9 (1992), pp. 330–338.
44. Van Spilbergen, *Journael van de voyagie gedaen met ses schepen*, p. 62.
45. This following section draws especially on Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, 'The glory of the Blaeu atlas and the "Master Colourist"', *Quaerendo*, 11 (1981), pp. 197–229, his 'The "Spanish Blaeu"', *Quaerendo*, 11 (1981), pp. 83–94, his 'Dr. Joan Blaeu and his sons', *Quaerendo*, 11 (1981), pp. 5–23, and Joan Blaeu, *Atlas Maior of 1665*, ed. Peter van der Krogt (Köln: Taschen, 2010).
46. Blaeu, *Atlas Maior of 1665*, p. 7.
47. E.G.R. Taylor, "'The English Atlas' of Moses Pitt, 1680–83', *The Geographical Journal*, 95 (1940), pp. 292–299.
48. The best overview is Peter van der Krogt (ed.), *Koeman's Atlantes Neerlandici: New Edition* (4 vols, Leiden: Brill, 1997–2012). See also Paul van den Brink and Jan Werner (eds), *Gesneden en gedrukt in de Kalverstraat. De kaarten- en atlassendrukkerij in Amsterdam tot in de 19e eeuw* (Utrecht: Hes, 1989).
49. Fontaine Verwey, 'The "Spanish Blaeu"', pp. 88–89.
50. *A catalogue of the great atlas or general geography of John Janssonius deceased. With his theatre of cities, and the prices for which they are ordinarily sold* (London: Moses Pitt, 1675).
51. Benjamin Schmidt, *Inventing Exoticism: Geography, Globalism, and Europe's Early Modern World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015). See also I.H. van Eeghen, 'Arnoldus Montanus' book on Japan', *Quaerendo*, 2 (1972), pp. 250–272.
52. See for example the printed price catalogue issued by the Blaeu-Wolfgang-Boom-Waesberghe-Goethals-Van Someren company in 1692: *Catalogus librorum* (Amsterdam: Blaeu, etc., 1692), p. [9].
53. Van Eeghen, 'Arnoldus Montanus' book on Japan', especially p. 264.

5 The Marketplace of Devotion

1. J.H. Kernkamp, 'Oude "Voyagien" en Hollandsche "Zeehanen"', *Bibliotheekleven*, 27 (1942), pp. 73–83, citing C.W. Bruinvis, 'Aanteekeningen: Uitrusting in de XVIIe eeuw', *De Navorscher*, 5 (1855), p. 97.
2. See also Chapter 6, below.
3. Adam Westerman, *Christelijcke Zee-vaert, ende wandel-wech, hoe een schipper, coopman ende reysende man in de vreesse Godes in zijn uyt ende in reyse, als oock een yghelijck mensche in tijde van onweder, dond'ren, blixeme, harde winden ende waters-noodt hem houden ende draghen sal* (Amsterdam: Broer Jansz, 1631), f. ***7v.
4. Kleerkooper and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam voornamelijk in de 17e eeuw*, pp. 1186–1190.
5. We have not been able to trace a surviving copy of Arnold's *Vader Onze*, nor indeed can we identify who the author was. Yet the text was clearly popular enough in the seventeenth century to warrant inclusion on the VOC list.
6. The Malay catechism: *Catechismus attau Adjáran derri agamma christáon* (Den Haag: widow and heirs of Hillebrant van Wouw, 1623), USTC 1018584.
7. Van Groesen, *Amsterdam's Atlantic*, p. 117.
8. Canin's 'Dordrecht' edition of 1571 was in all probability published in German exile after Canin fled the consequences of his involvement in the iconoclasm of 1566. See Paul Valkema Blouw, 'Jan Canin in Wesel, and in Emmerich?', in his *Dutch Typography in the Sixteenth Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), pp. 883–888.

9. ‘Two aces have nothing, five sixes give nothing, four threes help freely,’ added to Nehemiah 3:5, together with the note ‘The poor must bear their cross, the rich giveth nothing.’
10. Andrew Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt: Exile and the Development of Reformed Protestantism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
11. For the printer’s device, W. Heijting, *De Catechismi en Confessies in de Nederlandse Reformatie tot 1585* (2 vols, Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1989), II, p. 103.
12. Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, ‘De Nederlandse drukkers en de Bijbel,’ in his *Uit de wereld van het boek*, II, pp. 77–102.
13. Stijn van Rossem, ‘The struggle for economic and political domination of the production of almanacs in the Southern Netherlands (Antwerp, 1626–1642),’ in W.A. Kelly and G. Trentacosti (eds), *The Book in the Low Countries* (Edinburgh: Merchiston, 2015), pp. 81–120.
14. Meindert Schroor, ‘Heroriëntatie op de Unie en op Holland,’ in M.G.J. Duijvendak et al. (eds), *Geschiedenis van Groningen II: Nieuwe Tijd* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2008), p. 198.
15. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 13. 30 March 1641.
16. *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren.* 35. 29 August 1643. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 48. 28 November 1643.
17. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 40. 3 October 1648.
18. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 27. 2 July 1650.
19. *Ordinaris Dingsdaeghsche Courante.* 9. 25 February 1653.
20. J.J. van Toorenenbergen, ‘De psalmberijming van Ph. van Marnix,’ *Archief voor Nederlandsche kerkgeschiedenis*, 1 (1885), pp. 129–135, here p. 131. With thanks to Udo Brinkman for the reference.
21. Franciscus Ridderus, *Nuttige Tiidkorter voor reizende en andere luden* (Rotterdam: Joannes Naeranus, 1663), pp. 76–77.
22. P.G. Hoftijzer, ‘Boekenbezit van vrouwen in Leiden gedurende de Gouden Eeuw,’ *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis*, 12 (2005), pp. 29–45, here p. 31.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 39.
24. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 39. 26 September 1643.
25. He published his first book in 1613. Mark Aalderink, *Voor rechtzinnigheid en vroomheid, Marten Jansz Brandt (1613–1649)*.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 17–18, 41.
27. Arthur der Weduwen and Andrew Pettegree, ‘Publicity and its uses: lost books as revealed in newspaper advertisements in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic,’ in Bruni and Pettegree (eds), *Lost Books*.
28. See here especially W.J. op ’t Hof, *De praktijk der godzaligheid* (Amstelveen: Eon, 2009). Many of these privately held copies are recorded in the database PIETAS: <http://www.ssnr.nl/pietas>.
29. Cornelis Willem Schoneveld, *Intertraffic of the Mind: Studies in Seventeenth-century Anglo-Dutch Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1983).
30. Nicoline van der Sijs, *Calendarium van de Nederlandse taal: de geschiedenis van het Nederlands in jaartallen* (Den Haag: SDU, 2006).
31. Op ’t Hof, *De praktijk der godzaligheid*, p. 254.
32. Keith L. Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower: English Puritan Printing in the Netherlands, 1600–1640* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), p. 159. This may well have been an edition published under the fictitious printer’s name Jacob Williams. For the English trade see also Chapter 11, below.
33. Schoneveld, in *Intertraffic*, counts 641, but then he ignores all works shorter than forty pages.
34. In the preface to his translation of Edward Stillingfleet, *Origines sacrae, heilige oorspronkelijkheden* (Amsterdam: Ysbrandus Haring, 1690 [orig. 1662]).
35. Christopher Love, *Theologia Practica* (Amsterdam: Baltus en Johannes de Wild, 1659), preface of 26 September 1659, f. *2r.
36. Thomas Sprat, *Observations on Monsieur de Sorbiers Voyage into England* ([London]: for John Martyn and James Allestry, 1668). Quoted in Schoneveld, *Intertraffic*, p. 123.

37. See Chapters 8 and 9, below.
38. J.B.H. Alblas, *Johannes Boekholt (1656–1693), the First Dutch Publisher of John Bunyan and Other English Authors* (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf, 1987).
39. Ian Green, *The Christian's ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England, c. 1530–1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
40. Heijting, *Catechismi en confessions*.
41. A facsimile edition is available edited by H.W. de Kooker, *The Catalogus Universalis* (Utrecht: H&S, 1986).
42. This is 18 September 1621, Old Style (Gelderland having not yet adopted the Gregorian calendar).
43. Gellius Bouma, *Christelicke catechismus der Nederlantsche gereformeerde kercken* (Amsterdam: Theunis Jacobsz Lootsman, 1647), USTC 1013935: 'the catechism was printed and reprinted various times in various formats with Hans Walschaert in Amsterdam, and also in other cities'. Bouma then states that when the new Bible was published in 1637, 'many booksellers of various cities requested that I make the effort to satisfy their needs [for an updated edition]'.
44. USTC 1020106 (1628), 1515005 (1631), 1025135 (1635), 1021181 (1642), 1021008 (1644) and 1020107 (1646).
45. *Catalogus variorum & insignium librorum Hendrici Laurentii P.M. bibliopolæ Amsterodamensis. Quorum venditio habebitur Amsterodami, in ædibus defuncti die 20 julii 1649* (Amsterdam: for the heirs of Hendrick Laurensz, 1649), USTC 1022549.
46. For Beck, see *Spiegel van mijn leven*, p. 43. *Catalogus bibliothecae Abrami vander Meer* (Leiden: Isaac Commelinus, 1638); *Catalogus van een menigte treffelijcke boecken* (Amsterdam: Lescailje, 1668), octavo lot 373.
47. Janny Venema, *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652–1664* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2003), p. 225. The letter is in A.J.F. van Laer (ed.), *Correspondence of Jeremias van Rensselaer, 1652–1674* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1932), p. 231.
48. Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-century America* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).
49. Venema, *Beverwijck*, p. 150. A. Eekhof, *De Hervormde Kerk in Noord-Amerika* (2 vols, Den Haag: Nijhoff, 1913), I, p. 166–169, II, pp. 62–64. W.H. Kilpatrick, *The Dutch Schools of New Netherland and Colonial New York* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1912), pp. 19–38. See also Chapter 6, below.
50. Venema, *Beverwijck*, p. 149.
51. The manuscript original is today in Albany, First Dutch Reformed Church. Venema, *Beverwijck*, p. 312.
52. See Chapter 11, below.

6 Schoolmaster Bartjens

1. See most recently on Willem Bartjens the excellent introduction and reissue of his *Cijfferinghe* from 1604: Willem Bartjens, *De cijfferinghe (1604): Het rekenboek van de beroemde schoolmeester*, ed. Danny Beckers and Marjolein Kool (Hilversum: Verloren, 2004).
2. Willem Bartjens, *Vernieuwde cijfferinge: 't eerste deel* (S.l. [after the copy of Zwolle], s.n., 1648).
3. A.J.E.M. Smeur, *De zestiende-eeuwse Nederlandse rekenboeken* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).
4. Johan Coutereels, *Het konstigh cyffer-boeck* (Middelburg: widow of Symon Moulert, 1626), p. 38. Answer: 115 gulden, 13 stuivers and 6 penningen.
5. David Cock van Enchuysen, *De cyfer-konst* (Amsterdam: Hendrick Tjercksz de Vries, 1652), p. 318. Answer: fourteen days.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 238–239. Answer: 2¼ months.
7. Coutereels, *Het konstigh cyffer-boeck*, pp. 126–127. Answer: 320 soldiers.

8. Bartjens, *De cijfferinghe* (1604), pp. 83–85.
9. Regionaal Historisch Centrum Vecht en Venen, Weesp, GAW028-01 (Stad Weesp, 1355–1795), inv. nr. C 26.
10. *Ordinaris Dingsdaegsche Courante*. 36. 1 September 1648, and *Tijdinghen uyt verscheyde Quartieren*. 45. 7 November 1648.
11. Willem Frijhoff and Marijke Spies, 1650: *Hard-won Unity* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 236–237.
12. H.J. de Jonge, ‘The Latin Testament of Joseph Scaliger, 1607’, *Lias*, 2 (1975), pp. 249–258.
13. Lodovico Guicciardini, *Beschryvinghe van alle de Neder-landen* (Amsterdam: [Willem Jansz Blaeu], 1612), p. 27.
14. Jaap Bottema, *Naar school in de Ommelanden: Scholen, schoolmeesters en hun onderwijs in de Groninger Ommelanden, ca. 1500–1795* (Bedum: Egbert Forsten & Profiel, 1999), p. 19.
15. P.Th.F.M. Boekholt and E.P. de Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school in Nederland vanaf de middeleeuwen tot aan de huidige tijd* (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum, 1987), pp. 19, 42. The first synod of 1574 had urged similarly: see Jan de Vries and A.M. van der Woude, *The First Modern Economy: Success, Failure and Perseverance of the Dutch Economy, 1500–1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 170.
16. Leendert F. Groenendijk, ‘The Reformed Church and education during the Golden Age of the Dutch Republic’, in Wim Janse and Barbara Pitkin (eds), *The Formation of Clerical and Confessional Identities in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 53–70, here p. 59.
17. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, p. 20.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 24–32.
19. Beck, *Mijn voornaamste daden en ontmoetingen*.
20. Harry Bekkering et al. (eds), *De hele Biblebontse berg: De geschiedenis van het kinderboek in Nederland & Vlaanderen van de Middeleeuwen tot heden* (Amsterdam: Querido, 1989), pp. 105–167.
21. E.P. de Booy, ‘Het “basisonderwijs” in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw – de Stichtse dorpscholen’, *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 92 (1977), pp. 208–223, and Harry van der Laan, *Het Groninger Boekbedrijf: Drukkers, uitgevers en boekhandelaren in Groningen tot het eind van de negentiende eeuw* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2005), p. 34.
22. Judith Brouwer, *Levenstekens: Gekaapte brieven uit het Rampjaar 1672* (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2013), p. 66.
23. *Matery-boecken, of Voor-schriften seer bequaem voor de jonckheyt om wel te leren lezen, schryven, en een aenporringe tot alle deugden* (Deventer: Arnoldus Kurtenius, 1700).
24. On writing manuals see Brouwer, *Levenstekens*, pp. 61–79.
25. See Chapter 2, above.
26. Herman Allertsz Koster, *Spiegel der Jeught, ofte een kort verhael der voornaemste tyrannye, en barbarisch wreetheden, welcke de Spangiaerden hier in Nederlandt bedreven hebben* (Amsterdam: Otto Barentsz Smient, 1644).
27. Bekkering et al., *De hele Biblebontse berg*, pp. 127–130.
28. Carel de Gelliers, *Trap der Jeugd* (Alkmaar: Gerrit Welhem, [c. 1700]).
29. Nico Boerma et al. (eds), *Kinderprenten, volksprenten, centsprenten, schoolprenten: Populaire grafiek in de Nederlanden, 1650–1950* (Nijmegen: Vantilt, 2014).
30. Bekkering et al., *De hele Biblebontse berg*, pp. 106–111.
31. Dirck Adriaensz Valcooch, *Den regel der Duytsche schoolmeesters* (Amsterdam: Laurens Jacobsz, 1594).
32. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
33. Spufford, ‘Literacy, trade and religion’, p. 254.
34. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, pp. 27–29.
35. Spufford, ‘Literacy, trade and religion’, p. 259.
36. *Ordonnantie vande E.E. achtbare heeren schoolarchen der stadt Alckmaer* (Alkmaar: Cornelis van Trier, 1667).

37. Frijhoff and Spies, 1650, p. 240. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, p. 24. Bottema, *Naar school*, p. 58.
38. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, pp. 24, 50.
39. Bottema, *Naar school*, pp. 23, 75, 86, 91, 93, 106–107. See also Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, pp. 24, 42, 67.
40. Bartjens, *De cijfferinghe* (1604), p. 45.
41. *Ordonnantie op het stuck vande Nederduytsche ende Fransche Schoolen* (Leiden: s.n., 1636).
42. Blaak, *Literacy in Everyday Life*, p. 61.
43. Bekkering et al., *De hele Biblebontse berg*, pp. 119–121. Paul Keyser, ‘De schrijfmeester Jan vanden Velde (1568–1623) en zijn beteeckenis als schrijfkunstenaar’, *De Gulden Passer*, 21 (1943), pp. 225–260. Ton Croiset van Uchelen, ‘Jodocus Hondius’s *Theatrum artis scribendi* examined anew’, *Quaerendo*, 34 (2004), pp. 313–327. Herman de la Fontaine Verwey, ‘The Golden Age of Dutch calligraphy’, in J.P. Gumbert and M.J.M. de Haan (eds), *Miniatures, Scripts, Collections: Essays Presented to G.I. Lieftinck* (Amsterdam: Van Gendt, 1976).
44. Ton Croiset van Uchelen, ‘Maria Strick, schoolmistress and calligrapher in early seventeenth-century Holland’, *Quaerendo*, 39 (2009), pp. 83–132.
45. *Catalogus van verscheyde wel-geconditioneerde boecken* (Haarlem: Abraham Casteleyn, 1668).
46. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 37. 10 September 1639.
47. See Chapters 3, above, and 15, below.
48. *Tydinge uyt verscheyde Quartieren*. 17. 28 April 1668.
49. *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant*. 51. 18 December 1663.
50. *Ordinaris Dingsdaeghsche Courant*. 17. 26 April 1667.
51. *Amsterdamsche Courant*. 21 July 1685.
52. Groenendijk, ‘The Reformed Church and education’, p. 64.
53. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, pp. 61–65; Bottema, *Naar school*, p. 17; De Vries and Van der Woude, *First Modern Economy*, p. 170, argue the proportion was 10 per cent of Dutch boys; Frijhoff and Spies, 1650, p. 246, argue for 5 per cent. On the experiences of one Latin school student in the seventeenth century see A. Frank-van Westrienen, *Het schoolschrift van Pieter Teding van Berkhout: Vergezicht op het gymnasium onderwijs in de zeventiende-eeuwse Nederlanden* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2007).
54. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, pp. 53–54.
55. *School-ordre, gemaect ende gearresteert by de heeren Staten van Hollant ende West-Vrieslant, over de Latijnsche scholen binnen den selve lande. Den 1. octobris sestiendert-vijf-en-twintig* (Den Haag: widow and heirs of Hillebrant van Wouw, 1625). Ernst Jan Kuiper, *De Hollandse ‘Schoolordre’ van 1625* (Groningen: Wolters, 1958). See also C.S.M. Rademaker, *Gerardus Joannes Vossius (1577–1649)* (Zwolle: Tjeenk Willink, 1967), pp. 166–181.
56. See Chapter 8, below.
57. See for a full breakdown Kuiper, *De Hollandse ‘Schoolordre’*.
58. M.G.M. van der Poel, ‘De Elzeviers en de klassieken’, in B.P.M. Dongelmans, P.G. Hoftijzer and O.S. Lankhorst (eds), *Boekverkopers van Europa. Het 17de-eeuwse Nederlandse uitgevershuis Elzevier* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2000), pp. 115–133, here p. 121.
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61. Kuiper, *De Hollandse ‘Schoolordre’*, pp. 168, 170. Ph.H. Breuker, ‘Learboeken op de akademy en de Latynske skoallen yn Fryslan (1585–1685)’, in G.Th. Jensma, F.R.H. Smit and F. Westra (eds), *Universiteit te Franeker, 1585–1811* (Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy, 1985), pp. 438–451. For Dordrecht see *Leges scholae trivialis Dordrechtanae* (Dordrecht: Hendrick van Esch, 1658).
62. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, p. 64.
63. J. Spoelder, *Prijsboeken op de Latijnse school: Een studie naar het verschijnsel prijsuitreiking en prijsboek op de Latijnse Scholen in de Noordelijke Nederlanden, ca. 1585–1876, met een*

- repertorium van wapenstempels* (Amsterdam/Maarssen: APA-Holland Universiteits Pers, 2000).
64. Keblusek, *Boeken in de Hofstad*, p. 119. On Leers see Otto Lankhorst, *Reinier Leers, uitgever en boekverkoopster te Rotterdam (1654–1714): Een Europees 'libraire' en zijn fonds* (Amsterdam/Maarssen: APA-Holland Universiteits Pers, 1983), p. 18.
 65. Boekholt and De Booy, *Geschiedenis van de school*, p. 65. See also Chapter 12, below.
 66. *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant*. 12. 25 March 1670, and *Oprechte Haerlemse Dingsdaegse Courant*. 13. 1 April 1670.
 67. Verhoeven and Verkruijsse (eds), *Journael ofte gedenckwaerdige beschrijvinghe vande Oost-Indische reyse van Willem Ysbrantsz. Bontekoe van Hoorn*, p. 62.
 68. Van Selm, *De Amadis van Gaule-romans*, p. 91.
 69. Bekkering et al., *De hele Biblebontse berg*, p. 109.

7 The Life Academic

1. Willem Frijhoff, 'What is an early modern university? The conflict between Leiden and Amsterdam in 1631', in Helga Robinson-Hammerstein (ed.), *European Universities in the Age of Reformation and Counter-Reformation* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), pp. 149–168.
2. Dirk van Miert, *Humanism in an Age of Science: The Amsterdam Athenaeum in the Golden Age, 1632–1704* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
3. Caspar Barlaeus, *Mercator Sapiens, sive oratio de conjugendis mercaturae & philosophiae studiis* (Amsterdam: Willem Jansz Blaeu, 1632). See also Caspar Barlaeus, *Mercator Sapiens: Oratie gehouden by de inwijding van de Illustere School te Amsterdam op 9 Januari 1632*, ed. Sape van der Woude (Amsterdam: Universiteitsbibliotheek Amsterdam, 1967).
4. P.J. van Winter, *Hoger beroepsonderwijs avant-la-lettre: Bemoeiingen met de vorming van Landmeters en ingenieurs bij de Nederlandse universiteiten van de 17e en 18e eeuw* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandische Uitgevers, 1988).
5. P.G. Hoftijzer, *Exploring the Heritage of the Elzeviers, 1658–1713: A Tale of Fonts* (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2013), p. 19.
6. Djoek van Netten, "'Tot gerief ende commoditeyt vande professoren en studenten." Academiedrukkers in de zeventiende-eeuwse Republiek', *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis*, 15 (2008), pp. 51–70, here p. 61.
7. J.A.H. Bots, 'Harderwijkse professoren (1648–1812) en het benoemingsbeleid van de Gelderse curatoren', in J.A.H. Bots et al. (eds), *Het Gelders Athene: Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de Gelderse universiteit in Harderwijk (1648–1811)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000), p. 52.
8. Willem Frijhoff, 'Zeelands universiteit: hoe vaak het mislukte, en waarom', *Archief-mededelingen van het koninklijk zeeuwsch genootschap der wetenschappen* (1987), pp. 7–41.
9. Willem Frijhoff, 'Deventer en zijn gemiste universiteit: Het Athenaeum in de sociaal-culturele geschiedenis van Overijssel', *Overijsselse Historische Bijdragen*, 97 (1982), pp. 45–79.
10. Letter by John Dury to Dorothy Moore, 1 August 1641, in *The Hartlib Papers*, 2/5/5A-B. With thanks to Forrest Strickland for the reference.
11. W. Hellinga, C.S.M. Rademaker and P. Tuynman (eds), *Het uitleenboekje van Vossius* (Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandische Uitgeversmaatschappij, 1962).
12. J. Ensink, 'Het programma funebre aan de Groninger academie in de 17e en 18e eeuw', in A.H. Huussen Jr (ed.), *Onderwijs en onderzoek: studie en wetenschap aan de academie van Groningen in de 17e en 18e eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2003).
13. Van Netten, "'Tot gerief ende commoditeyt . . .'", p. 61.
14. Ku-ming Chang, 'From oral disputation to written text: the transformation of the dissertation in early modern Europe', *History of Universities*, 19 (2004), pp. 129–187.
15. Gerhard Wiesenfeldt, 'Academic writings and the rituals of early modern universities', *Intellectual History Review*, 26 (2016), pp. 447–460.

16. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 451.
17. Stanglin, 'Johannes Kuchlinus, the "Faithful Teacher"'.
18. Willem Frijhoff, *La Société néerlandaise et ses gradués, 1575–1814* (Amsterdam: APA, 1981), p. 389.
19. Dublin, Trinity College, BB. hh. 20 (11, 12).
20. None of the university dissertations, incidentally, are in the STCN.
21. Van Netten, "'Tot gerief ende commoditeyt . . .'", pp. 67–68.
22. J. Duinkerken, 'De plaats van de Gelderse Universiteit in de Harderwijkse samenleving', in J.A.H. Bots et al. (eds), *Het Gelders Athene: Bijdragen tot de geschiedenis van de Gelderse universiteit in Harderwijk (1648–1811)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2000), pp. 37–49, here p. 42.
23. Jacob van Sluis, *De Academie van Vriesland: Geschiedenis van de Academie en het Athenaeum te Franeker, 1585–1843* (Assen: Bornmeer, 2015), p. 74.
24. Chang, 'Oral disputation to written text', p. 141.
25. Out of a total of 8,267, 4,999 were in law and 2,793 in medicine. Frijhoff, *La Société néerlandaise*, p. 389.
26. Chang, 'Oral disputation to written text', p. 141.
27. *Proeve der drukkerij van Mr Abraham Elzevier* (Leiden: s.n., 1713). Hoftijzer, *Exploring the Heritage*, p. 27.
28. Otto Lankhorst, 'Dutch auctions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in Robin Myers, Michael Harris and Giles Mandelbrote (eds), *Under the Hammer: Book Auctions since the Seventeenth Century* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2001), pp. 65–87, here pp. 69–70.

8 The Men on the Cushions

1. Maarten Schneider, *De Voorgeschiedenis van de 'Algemeene Landsdrukkerij'* (Den Haag: Algemeene Landsdrukkerij, 1939), pp. 51–52. The themes developed in this chapter are discussed at greater length in Arthur der Weduwen, *Selling the Republican Ideal: State Communication in the Dutch Golden Age* (PhD dissertation, University of St Andrews, 2018).
2. Three seventeenth-century volumes of these ambassadorial letters can be found in the National Archives in The Hague, Archief Staten Generaal (1.01.02), inv. 12083–12085.
3. James D. Tracy, *The Founding of the Dutch Republic: War, Finance, and Politics in Holland, 1572–1588* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), and Joop Koopmans, *De Staten van Holland en de Opstand: De ontwikkeling van hun functies en organisatie in de periode 1544–1588* (Den Haag: Stichting Hollandse Historische Reeks, 1990).
4. Tracy, *The Founding of the Dutch Republic*, pp. 101–127. See also Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (2nd edn, London: Penguin, 1985), pp. 144–146.
5. Schneider, *Voorgeschiedenis*, pp. 2–9.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
7. Parker, *Dutch Revolt*, p. 119. See also Pettegree, *Emden and the Dutch Revolt*, and his *Foreign Protestant Communities in Sixteenth-century London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
8. Erfgoed Leiden, Stadsbestuur I, 1290–1575, inv. 387–389, and Stadsbestuur II, 1576–1816, inv. 14–41. See also W.C.S. van Benthem Jutting, 'Iets over de zogenoemde aflezingboeken in het Leidse gemeente-archief', *Leids Jaarboekje*, 61 (1969), pp. 99–113.
9. See for some examples Erfgoed Leiden, Stadsbestuur I, 1290–1575, inv. 389, ff. 53, 56v, 60, 61v, 65v–69v, 71, 73–75, 78, 81–82, 156–159.
10. Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekdrukkers*, pp. 133–135, 400, 426, 469, and Asaert, 1585: *De val van Antwerpen*.
11. Briels, *Zuidnederlandse boekdrukkers*, pp. 396–397.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 436.
13. G.A. Evers, 'Gegevens betreffende Utrechtsche Staten-, Stads- en Akademiedrukkers', *Het grafisch museum*, 1 (1930), pp. 30–37, here pp. 32–33.

14. Schneider, *Voorgeschiedenis*, p. 36.
15. Johannes Janssonius, *Nederlandtsche placcaet-boeck* (Amsterdam: Johannes Janssonius, 1644), f. 3r.
16. Stephen J. Milner, “Fanno bandire, notificare, et expressamente comandare”: town criers and the information economy of Renaissance Florence, *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance*, 16, nos 1–2 (2013), pp. 107–151.
17. Gemeentearchief Vlissingen, Verzameling gedrukte ordonnantiën (399), *Salaris voor de Gerechtsbodes te Vlissingen*.
18. Stadsarchief Kampen, Oud Archief Kampen, inv. 11, f. 182r.
19. Groninger archieven, Archief van de stad (1605), inv. 332 (1638), ff. 350r, 355v–356v, 402r.
20. H.J. Prakke, *Kerkgang om nieuws: De Kerkespraak: Praejournalische nieuwsvoorziening ten plattelande* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1955), pp. 18–19.
21. *Keuren der stad Leyden, geamplieert ende gerenoveert* (Amsterdam: Jan Hendricksz, 1657), f. *2r.
22. Pettegree, *The Invention of News*.
23. *Courante uyt Italien, Duytslandt, &c.* 2. 11 January 1631.
24. Alsoo mijne heeren van den geregte uyt de veelvuldige klagten van de gemeene backers bevinden dat d'onkosten der selver grooter worden, streckende tot merkelicke verachteringe van hare broot-winninge (Amsterdam: Johannes van Ravesteyn, 1670).
25. Lodewijk Mulder (ed.), *Journaal van Anthonis Duyck, Advokaat-Fiscaal van den Raad van State (1591–1602)* (2 vols, Den Haag/Arnhem: Martinus Nijhoff & D.A. Thieme, 1862–1864), II, p. 778.
26. Regionaal Archief Alkmaar, Archief van de gemeente Alkmaar, inv. 371, f. 360r.
27. Simon Groenveld, “Een enckel valsche ende lasterlijck verdictsel.” Een derde actie van Prins Willem II in juli 1650; in Simon Groenveld, Marianne Mout and I. Schöffer (eds), *Bestuurders en geleerden* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1985), pp. 113–125, here p. 113.
28. *Articulen gesloten ende geaccordeert, tusschen de Republicque van Engelande ter eener, ende de Stadt Amsterdam ter andere zijde* ([Den Haag: Willem Breeckvelt], 1650).
29. *Extract uyttet register vande willekeuren der stad Amstelredamme, ghesteekent mette letter M. 16.08.1650* (Amsterdam: s.n., 1650).
30. Harms, *Pamfletten en publieke opinie*, p. 105. See *Wilhem by der gratie Godts: Alsoo ons ter handen gecomen is seecker gedrukt gedicht, dragende den tytel van Blyschap over de verlossinghe van Amsterdam* (S.l., s.n., 1650).
31. *Amsterdams journael: Vervatende kortelijc van dag tot dag, alles watter gepasseert is van den 30 Julij, tot den 4 Augusti des jaers 1650* (S.l., s.n., 1650), p. 25.
32. *Propositie van syn hoogheyt ende de Staten Generael, gedaen inde respective steden van Hollandt* (S.l., s.n., 1650). *Propositie gedaen by syne Hoocheyt inde vergaderinghe vande Ed. Mog. Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt* (S.l., s.n., 1650). *Brief vande groot-mog: heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt nopende de cassatie van de militie* (S.l., s.n., 1650). *Deductie ofte verantwoordinge van de heeren burgermeesteren ende 36. Raden, op ende teghens de propositie by zyn Prince van Orangien overgelevert* (S.l., s.n., 1650).
33. *Copie van een missive gesonden by syn hoogheyt, aen de E.E. Heeren Burgemeesteren en Regeerders der Stadt Amsterdam* (S.l., s.n., 1650).
34. A copy of an otherwise unknown edition survives in the archive of the magistrates of Leiden: Erfgoed Leiden, Stadsarchief II (0501A), inv. 3145.
35. *Noodige aenmerckingen op seeckere propositie. In junio 1650. gedaen inde Hollantsche steden* (S.l., s.n., 1650), USTC 1029423, f. A2r.
36. Thrice in The Hague and twice in Amsterdam.
37. *Het recht der souverainiteyt van Hollandt, ende daer tegens de welgefundeerde redenen; by de heeren Staten Generael by-gebracht* (S.l., s.n., 1650), USTC 1034852, f. C3v.

9 The Dangerous Pleasures of Leisure

1. Herbert H. Rowen, *Jan de Witt, Statesman of the True Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Luc Panhuysen, *De ware vrijheid: De levens van Johan en Cornelis de Witt* (Amsterdam: Atlas, 2005).
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3. Sierhuis, *The Literature of the Arminian Controversy*, especially pp. 98–226. See also Chapters 2, above, and 10, below.
4. Arjan van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten: Rederijkers in de Noordelijke Nederlanden (1480–1650)* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009).
5. Jan Bloemendal and Frans-Willem Korsten (eds), *Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679): Dutch Playwright in the Golden Age* (Leiden: Brill, 2012). Piet Calis, *Vondel: Het verhaal van zijn leven (1587–1679)* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 2008).
6. Joost van den Vondel, *Palamedes oft vermoorde onnooselheyd* (Amsterdam: Jacob Aertsz Colom, 1625), f. (:):3r.
7. N.C.H. Wijngaards, *Joost van den Vondels Palamedes* (Zutphen: Thieme, [c. 1977]), p. 37.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 36.
9. R.B. Evenhuis, *Ook dat was Amsterdam, II: De kerk der hervorming in the gouden eeuw* (Amsterdam: Ten Have, 1967), pp. 288–293.
10. E.M. Grabowsky, "'Op de goede beterschap van ons sieke privilegie': Over Amsterdamse schouwburgregenten, drukkers en censuur', *Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis*, 2 (1995), pp. 34–55. See also *Onstage: Online Datasystem of Theatre in Amsterdam in the Golden Age*, ed. Frans Blom and Lia van Gemert, <http://www.vondel.humanities.uva.nl/onstage>.
11. Grabowsky, "'Op de goede beterschap van ons sieke privilegie'", p. 39. I.H. van Eeghen, *De Amsterdamse Boekhandel, 1680–1725* (5 vols, Amsterdam: Scheltema & Holkema, 1960–1978), IV, p. 28.
12. Joost van den Vondel, *Noah, of ondergang der eerste weerelt* (Amsterdam: widow of Abraham de Wees, 1667), f. A2r.
13. G.A. Bredero, *The Spanish Brabanter*, ed. H. David Brumble (Binghamton, NY: MRTS, 1982), pp. 3–5.
14. J.L. Price, *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic during the Seventeenth Century* (London: Batsford, 1974), p. 87.
15. Nina Geerdink, *Dichters en verdiensten: De sociale verankering van het dichterschap van Jan Vos (1610–1667)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2012), p. 43. Marijke Spies, 'Minerva's commentaar: gedichten rond het Amsterdamse stadhuis', *De zeventiende eeuw*, 9 (1993), pp. 15–32.
16. Rudolf Cordes, *Jan Zoet, Amsterdammer, 1609–1674: Leven en werk van een kleurrijk schrijver* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2008).
17. P.J. Verkruijsse, 'Het boekenmecenaat in de zeventiende eeuw', *De zeventiende eeuw*, 6 (1990), pp. 137–142, and his 'Holland "gedediceerd": Boekopdrachten in Holland in de 17e eeuw', *Holland*, 23 (1991), pp. 225–242.
18. Verkruijsse, 'Het boekenmecenaat in de zeventiende eeuw', p. 142.
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20. *Bibliotheca Laurentiana, hoc est catalogus librorum qui in officina Henrici Laurentii, bibliopolae Amstelodamensis venales extant* (Amsterdam: Hendrick Laurensz, 1647), pp. 259–260.
21. John Landwehr, 'De present-exemplaren van "Alle de Wercken" van Cats uit 1655', *De boekenwereld*, 14 (1997–1998), pp. 16–20. See for example the annotated price in the *Bibliotheca Nicolaiana* (Amsterdam: Joan II Blaeu and Pieter Blaeu, 1698), p. 256, in the University Library of Amsterdam, copy KVB, Nv 44:1.

22. See, for example, the sales catalogue issued by Moetjens in 1700: *Catalogue des livres de Hollande, de France et des autres pays* (Den Haag: Adriaen Moetjens, 1700).
23. See Chapter 11, below.
24. Frans R.E. Blom, 'Picturing New Netherland and New York: Dutch-Anglo transfer of New World information', in Siegfried Huigen, Jan L. de Jong and Elmer Kolfin (eds), *The Dutch Trading Companies as Knowledge Networks* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 103–126.
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28. University of Amsterdam, Special Collections. Call number: OG 80-245.
29. *Huwelyks-wensch, aan den eerwaarden jong-man Antonius ten Cate, en de eerbare jonge dogter Margareta Bronkhorst* (Amsterdam: widow of Pieter Arentsz, [1691]), f. A2r.
30. *Geuse Lietboek, waer in begrepen is den oorspronck vande troublen der Nederlantsche Oorloghen, en het gene daer op ghevolght is* (Dordrecht: widow of Isaac Reyers, 1668).
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37. Rudolf Rasch, 'De muziekoorlog tussen Estienne Roger en Pieter Mortier (1708–1711)', *De zeventiende eeuw*, 6 (1990), pp. 89–96.
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10 Art and Power

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3. *Ibid.*, p. 21.
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11 Bookshop of the World

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11. B.P.M. Dongelmans, 'Elzevier addenda et corrigenda', in Dongelmans et al. (eds), *Boekverkopers*, pp. 53–58.
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21. Sprunger, *Trumpets from the Tower*, pp. 31, 45.
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27. Oxford, Bodleian Library, 8o L 358 BS: 'Donum D. Dan. Elsevirij 1674'.
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29. The legend seems first to have been promoted by Hadrianus Junius in his patriotic treatise *Batavia* (Antwerp: Plantin, 1588), USTC 406803.

30. Bots, 'De Elzeviers en hun relatie met Frankrijk', p. 171.
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32. For instance, *Auctarium Bibliothecae Edinburgensae, sive catalogus librorum quos Guilielmus Drummondus Bibliothecae ab Hawthornden bibliothecae D.D.Q.* (Edinburgh: John Hart, 1627). C.P. Finlayson and S.M. Simpson, 'The history of the library, 1580–1710', in Jean R. Guild and Alexander Law (eds), *Edinburgh University Library, 1580–1980: A Collection of Historical Essays* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Library, 1982), pp. 45–50.
33. Gabriel Naudé, *Advice on Establishing a Library*, ed. Archer Taylor (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1950).
34. Above, Chapter 5.
35. Above, Chapter 4.
36. *Catalogus librorum bibliothecae Jacobi Canutii* (Copenhagen: Matthias Godicchen, [1661]), see lot 52 in the 12mos.
37. Thus a set of forty-four titles sold in 1662 in Copenhagen from the collection of the nobleman Laurentius Ulfeld appeared again in the sale of duplicates from the Copenhagen University Library in 1679, and sold from the collection of Matthias Foss in 1685. A set of thirty-two titles was sold from the collection of the minister Jacob Matthiae in 1662, again from the collection of fellow minister Johannis Svaningius in 1669, and from the collection of another minister, Richard Northuus, in 1686.
38. Józef Trypućko, *The Catalogue of the Book Collection of the Jesuit College in Braniewo Held in the University Library in Uppsala* (Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2007).
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40. *Ibid.*, pp. 151–152.
41. Kleerkooier and Van Stockum, *De boekhandel te Amsterdam voornamelijk in de 17e eeuw*, pp. 527–531.
42. Davies, *World of the Elzeviers*, p. 137.
43. Dongelmans, 'Elzevier addenda et corrigenda', pp. 53–58.
44. Gerda C. Huisman, 'Bibliothecae instructissimae: Geleerd boekenbezit in Groningen in de 17e en 18e eeuw', in A.H. Huussen (ed.), *Onderwijs en onderzoek: Studie en wetenschap aan de academie van Groningen in de 17e en 18e eeuw* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2003), pp. 299–328.
45. *Catalogus bibliothecae Reinoldus Alberda* (Groningen: Cornelis Barlinckhof, 1692).
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12 The Art of Collecting

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4. For the *Hollandse Mercurius* see Chapter 14, below.
5. Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Stadsbestuur II, inv. 67, f. 260r–v. With thanks to Paul Hoftijzer for sharing this reference with us.
6. Van Selm, *Een menigte treffelijke boecken*, pp. 45–46.

7. Ibid., p. 47.
8. Ad Leerintveld and Jan Bedaux (eds), *Historische Stadsbibliotheken in Nederland* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2016).
9. *Ordonnantie op het stuck van de librije der stadt Gouda* (Gouda: Cornelis Dyvoort, [1683]).
10. In Holland: Haarlem, Rotterdam, Alkmaar, Enkhuizen, Edam, Gouda, Delft, Dordrecht, Hoorn, Weesp and Gorinchem, along with Amsterdam.
11. *Catalogus bibliothecae Ultrajectinae* (Utrecht: Meinardi a Dreunen, 1670).
12. *Catalogus variorum & exquisitissimorum librorum, Danielis Heinsii* (Leiden: Pieter Leffen, 1656). This catalogue also has many books from Scaliger's collection, because Heinsius was one of three friends invited by Scaliger to choose books from his library after his death.
13. See above, Chapter 8.
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16. *Catalogus variorum librorum instructissimae bibliothecae praestantissimi doctissimiq. Viri in anglia defuncti clarissimi Gisberti Voetii* (London: Moses Pitt, 1678).
17. Ibid., sig. A2r–v.
18. Isidorius Pelusiotae, *Catalogus variorum librorum Gisberti Voetii*, lot 204 in the theological folios. *Pars prior Bibliothecae*, lot 19.
19. *Catalogus variorum librorum Gisberti Voetii*, lot 124. *Pars prior Bibliothecae*, lot 273.
20. Kees Zandvliet with Clé Lesger, *De 250 rijksten van de Gouden Eeuw: Kapitaal, macht, familie en levensstijl* (Amsterdam: Rijksmuseum en Nieuw Amsterdam, 2006).
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22. *Catalogus Gasparis Fagel*, Jurisprudence folios, lots 55, 111, 209.
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